# THE MORNIN'-GLORY GIRL

By
Alice M. Winlow
and
Kathryn Pocklington

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THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS DEDICATED
TO THOSE KINDLY SOULS
WHO CONSISTENTLY SING,
"SCATTER SEEDS OF KINDNESS."

# CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Dedication | 5 |
| Chapter I. Mrs. Wopp's Hospitality | 9 |
| Chapter II. Concerning Betty | 18 |
| Chapter III. A Day at School | 28 |
| Chapter IV. Wash-Day at Mrs. Wopp's | 35 |
| Chapter V. A Dance in the Cedar Hills | 45 |
| Chapter VI. An Evening in the Wopp Parlor | 58 |
| Chapter VII. The Little Church in the Coulee | 68 |
| Chapter VIII. Betty Visits the City of Her Dreams | 76 |
| Chapter IX. The Vaudeville Show | 84 |

# CONTENTS


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Chapter X. | |
| The Circus | 92 |
| Chapter XI. | |
| Jonah and the Whale | 105 |
| Chapter XII. | |
| The Autograph Quilt | 117 |
| Chapter XIII. | |
| Moses Gains Prestige | 131 |
| Chapter XIV. | |
| Betty Among the Flowers | 142 |
| Chapter XV. | |
| Merry-Making in the Hay-Loft | 157 |
| Chapter XVI. | |
| Moses Has Exciting Experiences | 174 |
| Chapter XVII. | |
| A Sample of Ebenezer Wopp's Ire | 192 |
| Chapter XVIII. | |
| A Pair of Checked Trousers | 206 |
| Chapter XIX. | |
| Betty's Illness | 213 |

## CHAPTER I.

### MRS. WOPP'S HOSPITALITY.

Ebenezer Wopp sat at the head of the table. Beaming from behind a promising array of cups and saucers, his portly wife presented a countenance of aggressive hospitality. In height and girth Mrs. Wopp had much the advantage of her husband.

"Arsk a blessin', Ebenezer."

All heads bowed as the compliant master of the house, with thin nervous hands outspread and in a voice quavering with piety, responded to this request. Moses of the freckled face and pale blue eyes, kept one eye open as grace was being said, in order to scan the bounteous display on the table. Furtively he chose the largest bun on the plate that was placed close to Betty, his little foster-sister. To annex the most corpulent pickle would require some slight manœuvring, but he felt sure it could be managed.

"Amen!"

Suddenly, all heads were raised and a sigh of satisfaction escaped Mrs. Wopp's lips.

"We do be glad to hev the new schoolmarm," she announced, "you might of mentioned her, in yer blessin', Ebenezer."

"I'll make a note of that, Lize."

The dutiful husband drew from his pocket a long slip of paper and a small stubby pencil. Having a poor memory, he had formed the habit of making a note of everything his wife suggested, so that he could fulfill her wishes in future. The notes were plentiful, but they failed in some unaccountable way to prod his memory.

"Never mind yer notes, Ebenezer, jist you sarve the pork."

It had been Mrs. Wopp's aim, to have the names for all the members of the household sanctified by biblical authority. She claimed to have had unnumbered admirers in her youth and had singled out her husband for his scriptural appellation. A store of names had been secretly acquired for use in the event of her marriage, but as in the course of years only one boy had come

to add freckles and rotundity to the family circle, she was thankful that she had used at least three of the collection on the fortunate youth. Moses Habakuk Ezra Wopp, the exact counterpart of his mother, sat next to his father and eyed the plate of Betty, who was seated beside him, mentally calculating the amount of each succulent morsel she consumed. Since he was twice her size, he was entitled, he thought, to at least twice her share. On his own plate a lonely pickled onion floated in gravy.

"Mar," he demanded hastily, "more marshed turnips, please."

"We shorely are glad to hev a teacher at larst," re-asserted the bustling lady of the house, as she passed a cup of creamy tea to her new boarder. "Did you hear what happened to our larst teacher, Miss Gordon?" Here the good lady heaved a deep sigh. "The pore man hed a tryin' time with some big boys named Bullock who started in to school larst fall arter workin' all summer. The teacher used to spend his evenin's to Bullock's bunkhouse, playin' black-jack with ole man Bullock."

"And could he beat the old gentleman?" inquired Nell Gordon, vastly entertained.

"Miss Gordon, with all his book larnin' he knowed no more 'bout black-jack than I know 'bout divin' fer pearls, and the Bullock boys thort he was no good anyhow, ef he couldn't beat their Par at cards. So one mornin' they met him as he was goin' to school, an' they give him a good beatin' up, then flung him in Rodd's creek to cool him, bein' winter. He crawled outer the creek, Miss Gordon, an' never went to the school no more. It shorely was a jedgement on him fer playin' those wicked card games. Moses, parse the ketchup."

This account of the abruptly ended career of her predecessor was somewhat disturbing to Nell.

"You must 'scuse me not goin' to meet you, Miss Gordon," apologized Mr. Wopp, as he held suspended a knife full of mashed potato, destined for his mouth. "But I hev a sick cow I couldn't git away from, so I ast Howard here to drive in fer you."

"It was quite all right," answered Nell,

anxiously watching for the reappearance of Mr. Wopp's knife, "Mr. Eliot gave me a glorious drive over the prairie behind his team of greys, but," with a sly look towards the young rancher, "I don't believe he likes to meet trains."

"La now! An' why do you say that, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Wopp. "Set up straight, Moses, yer back looks like you was packin' a sack of pertaters."

"I might as well tell you all about it, Mrs. Wopp," confessed Howard. "When I got to town and found the train was almost due, I felt frightfully shy. So I got Ken Judson to put on his boiled shirt and Sunday suit and go to the station. He looked the part, I assure you, much better than I would. He brought Miss Gordon to 'The Golden West' where I had recovered sufficiently to speak to her."

"To think you let that good-fer-nothin' Ken Judson, meet our school-marm," wailed Mrs. Wopp. "Why he is the most ungodly feller in town. His folks in England send him a lot of money so's he will keep away from them, an' he spends it all in drinkin' an' gamblin'."

"Never mind, Mrs. Wopp," said Nell pleasantly, "he is a perfect gentleman in manners and he wasn't drinking or gambling when I saw him. May I have a little more of your beautifully cooked meat?"

Mr. Wopp looked up in approval and brandished a formidable looking piece of fat meat, precariously poised on one prong of his fork and in his efforts to lose none of its dripping flavor, described an uncertain spiral in the air.

His fork having safely landed its cargo, Mr. Wopp laid it carefully down and remarking, "I must make a note of that," he began to inscribe Nell's diplomatic request. As he leaned over the paper, his head shone like a round china lamp-shade, its shining expanse relieved here and there, by long wisps of grey hair.

At this point Moses looked up from his plate and complained, "Mar, this piece o' meat I got, is so tough it hurts yer eyes to look at it."

"Moses, yer manners is shockin', did you expect to be sarved the best piece when company's here?"

By this time, Nell was struggling with a dish of hard underdone crab-apples. She chased a refractory apple round and round in its small dish. Finally, with a feeling of triumph, she brought the apple to a halt. Alas! it did not yield to the prodding of the spoon, but bounced up and with an accuracy worthy of a better cause, landed on the eye of Howard Eliot. Betty, all this time feasting her eyes on the new-comer, and enjoying the unusual opulence of the table, burst into hearty laughter.

"Biff on the eye!" she cried.

"Gee! Did you hear it splash?" screa ed Moses.

The cheerful clatter of knives and forks against Mrs. Wopp's best blue willow plates was a gentle accompaniment to the ripple of laughing apology that Nell offered to the victim. Any constraint that might have been felt hitherto among the circle, decreased perceptibly as the rancher wiped the sweet syrupy drops from his face.

By the time the deep apple-pie was brought in, raised in the centre by a cup, he had become facetious, and turning a mirth-

ful countenance to Nell, he whispered audibly, "Isn't it just like Fuji Yama?" Before Nell could answer, Betty broke in.

"What is Fuji Mamas?"

"A new kind of hen," retorted Moses.

"Oh Miss Gordon," cried Betty suddenly roused to fresh interest, "you must see my pet turkey after supper. He has only one eye an' he walks corner ways an' his name is Job an' I jist love him." Betty's breath was all used up and she sat back exhausted.

"Huh!" grunted Moses, "your ole turkey aint worth an eyestrain."

By this time Moses' plate was piled high with a steaming and odoriferous portion of Fuji Yama and he was content to postpone all discussions of Geography and fowls to an indefinite future. In a very few minutes, the entire mound had disappeared and Moses was polishing his plate with a piece of bread.

"Moses, ef you hev finished yer supper, change yer good clothes an' go git the cows," directed his mother. "Betty run an' fasten up the hens, else the coyotes'll git them."

"I suppose you have a large farm, Mr. Wopp," said Nell Gordon.

"We hev a homestead an' pre-emption, Miss Gordon, but only work a hundred acres or thereabout. We run stock on the rest of it, aint that the how of it Lize?" Mr. Wopp looked to his help-meet for corroboration.

At this moment a wild whoop was heard, and through the open door Moses could be seen dashing out of the corral gate on his cow-pony.

As Mrs. Wopp was preparing for bed that night, she recalled the sensation the sight of her reckless offspring had given her.

"When I see Moses was still wearin' his best Sunday coat an' pants an' tearin' along on that cayuse like John Gilping, I come all out in goose-flesh, Ebenezer, till you'd think the merkery had fell clean down to zero."

## CHAPTER II.

### CONCERNING BETTY.

The Wopp family had two domestic pets, a plump tortoise-shell cat called Nancy, and a black and white terrier named Jethro, after the father-in-law of Moses, the great law-giver.

Nancy was the older and larger of the two, and having long been the pampered favorite of the house, she had at first resented the introduction of Jethro. She would not associate with him at all, and whenever he came dancing into the room where she was, she generally withdrew with the greatest possible dignity.

But after a time Jethro grew very tired of playing with a dilapidated shoe, a shiny bone, a grimy dish-mop and other erstwhile interesting things, and he thought it would be delightful to make friends with Nancy and play with her. But Nancy was still unapproachable. When Jethro capered up to her she arched her back and spat at him. Not being a thin-skinned puppy, he refused to consider this rebuff as final.

"Perhaps this is Nancy's way of playing," he thought.

Nancy had jumped on a chair, and when Jethro pranced up to her again she promptly boxed his ear. The blow, delivered with such a soft paw, could not have been very severe, but the feelings of the pup were badly hurt. He did not yelp, but his brown eyes grew solemn and wistful and he ceased his antics. He put his forepaws on the rung of the chair and looked long and appealingly at Nancy. The cat sat down, her paws doubled under her, and apparently remained quite unmoved. But her heart may have been touched more than an observer would imagine, because from that time, she gradually grew more tolerant towards the pup. Now they were very good friends.

Betty, orphaned at the age of six, had been adopted by the kind-hearted Mrs. Wopp. The child found her chief joy in life, outside of Jethro, Nancy and Job, in a flower-bed. A small plot of ground had been allotted her for her own use, and there every spring for the last four years her pre-

cious flowers had bloomed and had filled her eyes with brightness and her soul with gladness. Morning-glories and nasturtiums were the surest to bloom. They climbed the strings so gracefully and turned the old weather-beaten fence where they grew into a tapestry of gorgeous dyes.

Every morning during the summer a bunch of morning-glories, wet with dew, adorned the breakfast table. Blue and pink and white, they seemed the very spirit of morning freshness and sweetness.

On the morning after Nell Gordon's arrival, she admired the lovely array of fairy-like trumpets that seemed to smile a welcome from the glass bowl in the centre of the table. A tiny spider had been hidden in the heart of one of the blooms, and was weaving a net of filmy loveliness from flower to flower.

"Oh Miss Gordon," cried Betty, her dark brown eyes sparkling with delight, "the flowers can talk to each other across them telfone wires, can't they?"

"Why yes Betty, what do you suppose they will talk about?"

"Oh 'bout the fairies an' stars an' lovely things that grown-ups know nothin' about."

"Do you understand them Betty?"

"Oh yes," said Betty solemnly, "they tell me orl their secrets. They call me their Mornin-Glory Girl." As she spoke she leaned over to touch with her slender, brown fingers one of the pure, white bells.

"Yes indeed," laughed Mrs. Wopp, who was just then entering the room with a platter of bacon and eggs, "Betty 's our mornin'-glory girl shore nuff, she's first up in the mornin', she's a glory little urchin an' she's our little girl to stay."

Mrs. Wopp, as was usual at the morning meal, appeared with her greyish-red hair tortured with curl papers. After depositing the appetizing breakfast dish on the table she thrust her head out of a window and called lustily, "Come on Moses the perkelater's perkin' an' the bacon's sizzlin' on the plate."

Moses, once seated, speedily overtook the other members of the family. Betty looked at him gravely and remarked, "Moses says nothin' buts eats purty steady on."

"Have more toast Glory," said Moses suddenly wakened. Unwrapping his leg from the rung of the chair, he reached across the table.

"No, Mosey, I must hurry and get some flowers fer school to-day."

"Oh go on Betty, a daddy-long-legs 'd die of starvin' on what you eat."

"Don't worry me Mosey, this is a 'portant day," then turning to Miss Gordon she added, "I'll take 'sturtiums an' larkspur an' sweet peas an' you'll be ever so happy lookin' at them." A busy silence ensued.

Presently, Moses made for the yard and on his way, offered tribute to Betty by standing on his head on the mat at the door.

"Moses stan's on his head so's his brains 'll filter back into place," teased Mrs. Wopp.

"Never mind Mosey, yer heart don't need fixin' anyhow," comforted Betty.

Her breakfast finished, Betty sought the company of Moses, who was in a small shed adjoining the kitchen. He was piling some fire-wood he had carried in from the yard.

"Don t you think the new teacher is jist

lovely Moses, with her big shinin' blue eyes an' wavy black hair?" Betty eagerly enquired, "An' aint her clothes lovely too?"

Moses suspended operations on the woodpile and leaned against it. "Huh," he grunted with masculine superiority, "all girls think of is looks. Some of them sorft lookin' teachers is the wust when it comes to lickin' the kids. You can't jedge a hoss by his hide."

"Now, Mosey, you like the new teacher's well 's I do, else why were you showin' off before her, ridin' Ladybird like mad."

"Mebbe she's all right," admitted the boy.

"I wonder ef she guesses you aint my really truly brother. Ef I only had your beaut-i-ful red hair an' white eyebrows, stead of havin' yaller hair an' brown eyebrows. I can't do nothin' jist now 'bout my hair, but s'pose I cut off my eyebrows an' make them look nice an' white like yours. Mosey," coaxingly, "you cut them fer me."

"Naw," answered the boy, "What 'd Mar say? she'd put a tin ear on me."

"You know she never does nothin' to us really, Moses, no matter how she jaws.

Come on, you clipped yer pony so lovely an' evenlike. The horse-clippers is hangin' on the wall behind you."

"I dassent do it, Betty," replied Moses. "Anyhow this ole pair of scissors 'd do the job better."

"Then you don't love yer li'l sister ef you don't want her to look like you." Betty almost wept.

"Orl right Betty, I'll do it, but ef it is a poor job don't blame me," returned Moses as he advanced with the scissors.

Betty winced slightly as the chilly weapon touched her face, but recollecting the importance of the issue at stake she submitted tamely to be shorn. In a few moments Moses stepped back to contemplate the result of his drastic work. There was no denying that it had totally changed his little sister's appearance. A queer expression on Moses' face made Betty enquire anxiously, "What is it? Don't I look orlright Moses?"

"You look orful, jist like you was growin' a pair of speckled toothbrushes. What 'll Mar say? You carn't go to school like that."

"I'll take all the blame Mosey."

"Ef you could only see how you look, Betty. You must hev some eyebrows somehow."

"Put a li'l shoe-black on then an' that'll make me dark again," advised Betty serenely.

A liberal application of shoe paste furnished the unfortunate victim with a startling pair of jet-black eyebrows, nearly an inch in depth. Appalled at what he saw, Moses drew from his pocket a grimy handkerchief. Dampening one corner of it in his mouth, the most expeditious thing to do under the circumstances, he carefully wiped around the outside of these funereal bands, reducing them slightly in size but also straightening their edges.

"Moses! Betty! Time fer school!" called Mrs. Wopp. Betty, satisfied that after Moses' frenzied ministrations she was quite presentable, hastened into the house. Moses fled into the yard where he became very active splitting wood, his guilty conscience adding efficiency to his arm.

"Land o' Goshen, child," shrieked Mrs.

Wopp throwing up her hands in dismay, "whatever hev you been doin' to yerself. You look jist like a wooden Injin. I wouldn't of knowed you ef I'd met you in the streets of Judear."

Nell Gordon, ready for school, came into the kitchen and catching sight of Betty was seized with such uncontrollable mirth that she fled upstairs again.

"Come here Betty, till I clean yer face. Where is that boy Moses? I know he had a hand in this. Drat him anyhow," said the incensed Mrs. Wopp.

"Moses didn't want to clip me Mar, but I thought 'twould be a 'provement to hev nice white eyebrows." As Betty spoke one large tear rolled slowly down her cheek moistening in its course a small drop of blacking which Moses had overlooked in his cleansing operations, adding still more to the child's grotesque appearance.

"White eyebrows child! What are you talkin' about? Yer eyebrows are blacker nor that stove."

Betty, feeling that further explanations were worse than useless, submitted to be led

to the sink where her energetic foster-mother subjected her to so many soapy treatments that in a few minutes time she emerged very red in the face but purified.

As Mrs. Wopp stood watching her family and the new teacher climb the hill on their way to school, she remarked to herself, "That boy jist naterly takes to mischief same as a gopher takes to my green peas."

## CHAPTER III.

### A DAY AT SCHOOL.

In the front seat of the Wallace school sat Mannel Rodd. Nell Gordon declared that he was the roundest object she had ever seen in human form. Though he had arrived at the mature age of five, he still retained that cherubic appearance which one sees in the paintings of old masters. His eyes were as round as the rather sparsely-located buttons on his shirt. His nose was a small round knob. When he opened his little round mouth to lubricate a squeaky slate pencil or perhaps to enunciate some such interesting statement as this, "The cat is on the mat," he disclosed a row of pearly little teeth. Indeed his whole face would have been as round as the moon, were it not that his chin took an unexpected little saucer-like curve in the very middle of it.

It was apparent to the most casual observer that Mannel's whole wardrobe consisted of one grey shirt, one pair of faded

blue overalls and a pair of braces. To the uninitiated his occasional absences from school for an entire day would have seemed most mysterious. Leading questions as to the cause having been put to other members of the family who were present elicited only a reluctant reply that Mannel was not ill. Further than this they would not go. At last even on the most obtuse one, light would dawn. Mannel was being laundered.

This small boy seemed to accept the limitations of his lot with a Micawber-like philosophy. Indeed it may easily have escaped his youthful notice, that there were persons in the world who did not have to spend a day in bed while their clothing was being washed. To Mannel a second set of garments, even of so simple a character as those he constantly wore, would have seemed untold wealth.

Perhaps the fact that Mannel came from a home where Russian was the language in use and that he knew little English, accounted for his abnormal seriousness during school hours. He could not be absolutely sure what was being said or what might be

done to him. Perhaps some cruel elder brother, before Mannel had even started his education, had explained to him in voluble Russian that dreadful pains and penalties were likely to follow the slightest deviation from the paths of virtue. Certain it is that he kept a close watch on the teacher, and that none of her slightest movements escaped him. Though his general appearance might cause mirth in others, he himself seldom smiled. Day by day he sat in his little front seat grasping slate and pencil in chubby hands, gazing earnestly at the sums on the blackboard as he copied them down. Afterward he worked these with fitting solemnity. To him they appeared to be of the greatest difficulty and of national importance. Sometimes he wrote endless rows of letters on his slate. Sometimes he made nondescript figures out of plasticine or drew patterns on his slate or counted beads. At other times, grievous to relate, when he felt sure the teacher was otherwise engaged and could not possibly see him, he drew fierce triangular cats with four or perhaps five stiff, geometrical legs and rampant tails.

By two o'clock one bright afternoon in May the school children found it hard to keep their minds concentrated on their lessons. But when their teacher said, "Now, Moses, will you pass the singing books," a wave of awakened interest perceptibly cleared the atmosphere. Moses promptly proceeded to distribute the geography textbooks.

"This aint got poultry in it nor moosic nor nothin'," complained one small youth. Moses made several further attempts to comply with the modest request of his teacher and at last each child held in grubby hands a book of quaint verses glorified by the tonic sol fah.

"Doh, re, mi, fah, soh, la, ti, doh," sang the children in faint uncertain tones.

"Put some sunshine into your voices children," admonished Nell.

"Now then,

Dough when Mother bakes the bread,
Me when I catch you sleepy head,
Ray when the sun shines on your bed,
Saw when you work in the back woodshed."

Some of the voices were cracked and others badly out of tune. Moses Wopp's voice, loudest of all, sounded like a foghorn and the windows fairly rattled in their frames. Nell motioned him to her desk. She thought by occupying his attention elsewhere the music lesson might proceed with more melody and less noise. Moses had developed his stentorian tones at home, by the lusty singing of Hallelujah hymns under the strict supervision of his mother.

"What's matter 's Gordon?" he enquired anxiously.

"Sharpen these pencils, Moses, please, for the drawing lesson."

Moses sat down to the task; but fearing his education was being interfered with, looked up from time to time and added a hoarse phrase to the general tumult. He caught Betty's eye and significantly squinted his own right optic to remind her of Job, whereon Betty's voice trailed off into a half-suppressed chuckle.

Before school was dismissed Mannel Rodd, after earnest solicitation on the part of an older sister, was induced to mount the

platform, where he shyly and with every evidence of stage fright recited,

"Here I stand upon this stage
A pretty little figger,
And if the girls don't love me now
They will when I am bigger."

As the children left the school-house, Betty was met by Job. He appeared to be headed for a point at an angle of about forty-five degrees from his mistress, but it was only his corner-wise way of walking, caused by his defective eye. Notwithstanding his seemingly erratic course he reached Betty's side and thrust his head into the pocket of her small pinafore. He found there what put him into high good humor. Gaily he strutted after his little mistress. Bringing up the rear came Moses shuffling along, accompanied by Jethro. He took from his pocket a huge bun.

"S'tup," he commanded. Jethro immediately sat up on his hind legs.

"Aw Mosey," cried Betty, "give it to him in two pieces an' make him twict as happy."

"Naw Nosey," he retorted, "there ain't

no bun to break in two, the dorg is outside the bun orlready."

The bun in question must have had great dynamic force, the tail of Jethro bearing evidence to the internal power generated.

## CHAPTEP IV.

### WASH-DAY AT MRS. WOPP'S.

"As the door creaketh on his hinges, so the slugger turneth on his bed." Liza Wopp's voice was compelling in its significance. Through the rose-lit dreams of Moses, the sound and the awful words were like the threatenings of an approaching storm.

"Yeh Mar, I'm comin'."

Moses' teeth chattered. It was not cold, but wash-day meant to the unhappy boy a dismal round of duties.

"Oh Mosey," cried Betty at the breakfast table, being first on the scene to arrange her flowers, "we'll hev a spellin' match to-day I bet."

"Don't care a doughnut," answered Moses defiantly, "I'd ruther turn the washin' machine any day than stand like a goose spellin' words any arss can spell."

Betty playfully thrust a small forefinger into one of the fresh biscuits on the table

and bore it, impaled on the rosy weapon, triumphantly to her plate. This was for the amusement of Moses, but instead of laughing as he was expected to do, he eyed his little sister with assumed indifference.

"You carnt spell so smart anyways," he ventured. Betty turned her piquant nose up at him and suddenly bounced up from the table.

"Oh, poor li'l Nancy wants in!" She raised the window and gently lifted the cat into the room. Running to her place at the table, she poured half of her cup of milk into a saucer and set it in a sunny spot on the floor.

"There Nancy," she whispered, "is a sunbeam for breakfast dipped in milk."

The sunbeam somehow got into the internal decorations of Nancy and filtered out through her eyes. Their amber depths seemed to have turned into liquid gold.

Jethro, lying on a mat at the door, was contentedly gnawing a bone. Nancy, having finished her milk, and still enjoying its flavor from her whiskers, as Betty remarked, stealthily approached her canine play-

mate. A slight altercation took place concerning the ownership of the bone. It was not long before Jethro walked out of the room, perceptibly toeing in, and probably reflecting that life was too short to wrangle over a bare bone anyway.

Mrs. Wopp was too busy to eat breakfast in the orthodox fashion. She could be heard in the kitchen preparing for the trying ordeal of wash-day. Out in the yard the head of the house was busy feeding the fowl.

Clank! Clank! Clank!

The sound was an ominous warning to Moses, to finish his breakfast with all possible speed.

"Good-by Dad and Mar and Mosey," called Betty as she sped down the path toward the school-house.

Moses heaved a sigh, as he entered the kitchen and took his stand at the washing-machine. One hundred and thirty-seven times that diabolical barrel had to be turned before the dirt accumulated by the Wopp family during the week, could be obliterated.

The clanking began in earnest. Moses stood, turning till each freckle on his ruddy face shone with honest sweat.

"Now Moses," announced his mother, "Jist for a change an' rest like, turn this here separator."

Another sound in a somewhat higher key was heard. Moses had simply modulated in his domestic symphony of labor from a major task to a minor one. As a change and refreshing recreation, Moses was allowed to turn the small wheat-mill. Ninety soul-stirring turns it required to empty the hopper once, and he must turn out enough flour for a batch of bread. His youthful soul was in revolt at such servitude. He had no sympathy to squander on the children of Israel in bondage vile. Making bricks for Pharoah was infantile amusement compared to his labor.

"The Lord loveth a cheerful liver, Moses," said his mother encouragingly, as she saw the growing acidity of the boy's countenance. Mrs. Wopp had never forgotten a certain missionary service, during which she had studied a text in gold lettering of

old English type on the wall. The uncertain light of stained glass falling on the last word had made it difficult to read. But at last realizing that a sound liver and cheerfulness are closely associated, she had seen no incongruity in her translation of the text.

"All this turnin' is good for the liver too you know," she continued, as her son's vinegary expression remained unaltered.

"Yeh," scoffed Moses, "this here turnin' machines every Monday makes me sick. I aint got no liver left to be cheerful."

Mrs. Wopp was much too energetically engaged to enter into fuller argument. She busied herself preparing the tubs for rinsing, singing in a high tremolo, "Shall we gather at the river?"

"Now Moses," she called at the end of the third verse, "git the water for the rinsin'." The clanking lessened and slowly died down to a complaining rumble. It might have been some monster suffering from indigestion.

Mrs. Wopp's eagle eye, again rested on the lowering face of her offspring.

"Moses my boy, yer bile must be riz; this very night you git a dose of physic." Moses lower lip dropped lower and lower.

"Take care ole boy, you'll trip on yer lip in another minute."

Moses, his feelings by this time wrought to a state of down-right rebellion, grasped a pail in either hand and sought the peaceful atmosphere of the river.

When Betty returned from school in the afternoon, she beheld snowy billowing apparel on the clothes-line. Mrs. Wopp, being very thrifty in the matter of using up flour and sugar sacks for underwear, had a motley collection of garments suspended by wooden pegs. A night-shirt of Mr. Wopp's bore the inscription "Three Roses" dimly outlined in pink, while on the southern portion of a pair of more intimate garments could be discerned, fading into palest blue. "Great Western Mills." The wind was causing a riotous time among the cheerful array of reconstructed sacks, and as Betty ran down the path singing "Twenty froggies went to school," a sugar sack sleeve of Moses' shirt embraced a flour sack bosom

of his father's undergarment; and "Pure Cane Sugar" saluted "Ogiveme's Mills."

Betty cheerfully performed her task of bringing in the clothes saturated with wind and sunshine. She thought the sweetest smell in the world next to morning-glories and nasturtiums was the smell of clean clothes fresh from the line.

"They smell like the sunbeams was sprinklin' them with scent," she declared as she and Moses brought the last basketful into the house. Mrs. Wopp's nightgown of ample proportions was left out a little longer being still somewhat damp.

As she went about her work, Betty's braids of fair hair tied with wisps of faded red ribbon stood out stiffly from her head. Her eyebrows were not quite grown in yet and she presented a comical appearance blinking in the sun as she regarded Moses who was helping her.

"Gee! Betty," laughed the boy, "yer eyes look orful yet, this is the fust good shake my sides hev felt to-day, it's jist been 'orrible the way Mar was jawred."

The basket piled high with snowy linen

and cotton seemed almost to overflow the brim. Betty pressed the clothes down with her brown hands, while the complaining boy enlarged on the so did details of that trying washday and on the manner in which his mother had teased him. The child's sense of humor outbalanced even her sympathy and a peal of laughter rang out. Her laugh was a long delicious trill, as though a bird had dropped from the clouds singing still with the sunrise tangled in its notes. Moses paused long enough for a procession of commas and semicolons to pass by. Then seeing his disappointment in her apparent lack of sympathy, Betty hastened to console him.

"Never mind Mosey, Next Monday I'm goin' to ask Mar to let me stay home and turn the nasty mouldy machine."

"Oh no Betty," Moses tones were of an elder-brotherly authority, "yer li'l han's aint meant fer sich servitood. I'd not stan' by an' see you do that." With all his teasing at times, Moses adored his little foster-sister. He idealized her, and as Mrs. Wopp had often remarked, whenever Betty

left his presence he saw her ascend into heaven in a "Whirlwin' of fire, an' go-cart of flame."

As that energetic lady bustled about the kitchen the same evening setting the bread, her voice rose in a series of trills and other embellishments as she sang "Where is my wanderin' boy to-night?"

Balancing her voice on a very high note she popped her head through the dining-room door to speak to her husband. He was seated at the table reading "The Family Heraid." His straggling grey locks were disordered with his mental effort and formed a frieze of irregular design on his shining forehead. Mrs. Wopp's voice, in a moment was safe on terra firma.

"Ebenezer, you might bring in my slumber robe, bein's I'm so busy an' Mose an' Betty's gone to bed."

"All right Lize, I'll jist make a note of that."

There was room on the slip of paper for only this last item, so numerous had been the demands, during this busy day, on Mr. Wopp's memory.

He returned his notes to his pocket with the assurance of one whose unreliable memory has been fortified and rendered infallible. Nevertheless the voluminous folds of Eliza Wopp's cotton nightgown fluttered all night under the starry heavens.

## CHAPTER V.

### A DANCE IN THE CEDAR HILLS.

It was a fine summer evening. The whole Wopp family was getting ready to go to a dance, to be held at a ranch some ten miles off. An array of clean clothing was laid out on the different beds and an odor of musk-scented soap pervaded the air.

"Now, Moses, look sharp. Quit yer foolin' an' git busy," called Mrs. Wopp, to the son and heir, whose toilet was not even begun. She herself was busy braiding Betty's fair hair. "Be sure to warsh yer neck an' ears. Larst party we was to, Mis' Williams says to me, she says, 'Is that your Moses settin' on that bench? La me! he seems darker complected than I ever seed him before. I thort he were some Arfrican,' she says. I hev always been a godly woman, Moses, ef I do go to a dance now an' agin. Anyhow, the good book says there is a time to dance, but it aint got no

patience with dirt. Git yerself cleaned up, then go an' hook up the team."

At this juncture there was a knock at the door. It was Howard Eliot who had called for Nell.

Howard rode his chestnut saddle-horse "The Kid," while Nell had "Ladybird." Moses was not so pious by nature as his mother, and he had flatly refused to have his pinto's disposition spoiled by giving her such a name as "Hephzibah" his mother's choice.

The two riders, who were to be followed by the family in the democrat, set off at a gentle lope. Before them lay the Cedar Hills over which the moon was just rising sharply defining their wooded crests. They followed a trail well-known to Howard who had ridden the range, in this district for several years. Nell, though an eastern girl, was at home in the saddle having always been accustomed to riding.

"I believe you are becoming a confirmed westerner," said Howard as they slowed down to a walk. "If you once drink slough water you know you will never like any other."

"Perhaps not," answered Nell, "I can see there are wonderful possibilities in this vast country. Some day this prairie will be dotted here and there with prosperous towns. But don't let us be serious. Here's a grand place for a race. I know 'Ladybird' can beat 'The Kid.'"

Off she darted followed by Howard. The horses swept over the smooth turf in long easy strides, gradually increasing in speed as pinto and chestnut realized that this was a trial of fleetness. It was glorious, but presently Nell, remembering Moses' parting injunctions in regard to his beloved pinto, pulled up. "Next time, Ladybird, we will win never fear," she said consolingly, patting the horse's sleek neck.

The dance was held in a new barn of which the floor was especially good. Indeed the young people of the family had seen to that. Unfortunately the stable end of the building was already in use and this proved to be somewhat inconvenient. During the festivities of the evening one delicate lady fainted from excitement and overpowering stable odors. She speedily re-

vived, however, on being carried into the fresh air and soused with a bucket of cold water. The building was illuminated with lanterns and an occasional oil lamp. Benches were ranged along the walls. The crowd was large and as usual at these affairs men predominated in numbers. The dances were mostly square ones and when a husky caller-off became hoarse and exhausted with shouting, another took his place. He usually stood at one end of the building beside the fiddler.

Howard led Nell through the intricacies of a square dance.

"Salute your partner," yelled Geordie Hodgekiss, the first caller-off.

Howard gravely did as ordered.

"Grand chain," bawled Geordie evidently feeling his importance, "dos-et-dos, ladies' chain, swing on the corners, and put some feelin' in your step.

Ladies cross your lily-white hands
And gents your black and tan,
Ricketty jig and away we go."

Which last order was the signal for a giddy frolic. Finally, "Everybody prom-

enade, you know where," and the dancers joined the spectators on the benches.

"Here come the Wopps," said Nell to her companion as the family entered, led as usual by Mrs. Wopp. Mr. Wopp came next especially scoured for the occasion, freshly shaved and with long side hair carefully oiled and combed over the bald spot on his crown. He carried a few long strips of paper in his hand. Beside him walked Betty inwardly disapproving of the two stiff braids with which her head was adorned. Bringing up the rear was Moses, his face shining with soap and satisfaction and wearing a new brown suit at least two sizes too large for him. He was bent on a good time which in his case meant sitting on a side bench with a few other youths and jeering at the mistakes of the dancers. Close at his heels came Jethro who had pleaded so hard to be brought along and had gazed at them with such tragic appeal in his eyes that they could not disappoint him. He was now stationed under a bench, having first been intimidated with dire threats as to what would happen to him

should he come out and trip up the dancers.

"Choose your partners for a quadrille," called Geordie, and once more the floor was filled. There was room for six sets and in one of these stood Mr. Wopp with his partner Nell, while at the capacious side of Mrs. Wopp was Howard.

"Salute your partner, swing—your partner." Mrs. Wopp who had expected "Swing on the corner," had seized the unfortunate Mr. Wopp and in spite of his struggles was spinning him violently around, while their respective partners stood and looked helplessly on.

"Stop Mar, lemme go, you are wrong," gasped the little man whose efforts to escape from her clutches had grown more and more feeble. "Drat that man, anyhow, why carnt he say what he means?" answered the mortified lady. The jeers of the youths on the benches added to her discomforture. Nell began to wonder whether her mind and constitution were robust enough to allow her to engage in such festivities as these very often.

Now the dance was a two-step and Mrs.

Wopp, who drew a hard and fast line at round dances, declaring they were instigated by the evil one, sat and looked on talking to Betty meanwhile.

"I hope when you are growed up, my dear, you will never dance them waltzes an' two-steps. The good Lord carnt love them as does sich things."

Betty who secretly preferred to trip the light fantastic toe in this manner, maintained a discreet silence.

Mrs. Wopp leaning towards a lady on her right inquired, "Do you know Mis' Stephens, why Joe Avery is not dancin' this evenin'. Ever sence we come into this here barn he has never moved from his seat."

"I kin tell you, Mrs. Wopp. He met with an accident comin' over. He was gittin' through Abe Bower's wire fence to save goin' round by the gate when Ben Bower's bull-dog 'Jeff' caught sight of him. Next minute Joe seen the bull-dog comin' an' started back through the fence. Land sakes! The tear he got in the seat of his pants was somethin' shockin'."

"Pore Joe! Truly the way of the trans-

gressor is hard. I feel bad fer him, to think he has to set round all evenin' and carnt even git up to git a drink of water fer hisself."

"I wouldn't jist say he cant git up, Mrs. Wopp, fer Mrs. Bower sewed the tear up fer him; but the pants bein' still on him and Joe bein' shy-like she felt too narvous to make a good job of it an' I reckon Joe is afeard those few stitches Mrs. Bower put in may not be very secoor."

Mr. Wopp in the meantime had seated himself on the other side of Betty and was busy taking notes on the dance then in progress. "It was so interestin" he said, "and the poetry might come in handy." The dance was called "Captain Jinks."

"Captain Jinks of the horse marine,
He feeds his horse on corn and beans.

"Swing with Captain Jinks, swing with the horse that ate the beans, swing with the girl with the great big feet."

Though these and similar remarks seemed rather personal no resentment was felt by anybody.

As the evening wore on Mrs. Wopp, Mrs.

Stephens and a few other ladies adjourned to a box stall where the refreshments were stored. Pleased with the prospect of dispensing lavish hospitality from the combined larders of the neighborhood, Mrs. Wopp's face radiated cheerfulness.

A small stove had been set up in the improvised kitchen, and a big boiler filled with water. This was now boiling furiously and the ladies proceeded to make the coffee. Cakes and pies were cut, cups and saucers were piled in one huge basket and sandwiches in another.

"Now Mis' Stephens, call the boys," requested Mrs. Wopp who was the busiest of the group.

Armed with the big baskets, several young men of the party travelled from bench to bench, followed by others with coffee pots. The strenuous exercises of the evening, preceded in most cases by a long ride or drive, had developed vigorous appetites and the viands were disposed of with wonderful rapidity.

"Aint it amazin' how hungry one gits," hoarsely remarked Mr. Wopp who had not

spoken for some time owing to close application to the task in hand. "Lize, I want a piece of that punkin pie of yourn." Here he caressed the bulging buttons on his waistcoat. "My mouth's waterin' fer it an' I b'lieve I hev room."

"Moses, here with that pie," called the gratified Mrs. Wopp, "Yer par wants some."

Moses came bearing an achievement of spicy, opaque amber supported and surrounded by tantalizing, toast-brown crust. Before the expectant Mr. Wopp, however, had time to note these details, there was a quick rush of a small black and white object, a crash, some ear-splitting howls, as Moses, pie, Jethro, and one of Mrs. Wopp's best blue dinner plates were precipitated against Mr. Wopp's legs. Down his Sunday trousers meandered a yellow glacier which Mrs. Wopp regarded with dismay.

"Moses, yer as useless as the hole in a doughnut; here quick gimme yer handkerchief till I mop up yer Par."

Vigorously cleaning up the still bewildered victim, Mrs. Wopp hurled fresh orders.

"Don't stan' starin' there like Betty's chiner doll, go git another of my pies."

This time Moses was more successful. Comforted, he felt he could enjoy a few morsels himself. Calling the contrite Jethro, who, after extricating himself from the ruins he had made, had retired under a bench, the boy made his way to a remote corner. Here no parental admonitions would disturb him. He surveyed with pleased expectancy an enormous triangle of pie, a huge slab of gingerbread, a monument of glistening iced cake, half a dozen tarts, and a few other trifles he had brought with him.

Supper over and dishes hurried out of sight, the floor was once more cleared and the real business of the evening was resumed.

"Come on Betty, you haven't had a dance this evening. It isn't fair for the grown-ups to have all the fun," invited Howard Eliot.

"Oh, I was havin' lots of fun watchin' the dancin'," returned Betty rising with childish alacrity. The wistful look that belied her words disappeared like magic.

"Aint Miss Gordon a lovely dancer?" she interrogated, "and aint she lovely herself? I've been watchin' you an' her dance all evenin'. Moses says he's almost wore out one eye lookin' at you both. He says he don't go in strong fer teachers, but he thinks Miss Gordon is worth an eyestrain anyways."

Betty was trying to keep up the engaging flow of talk but the dance proved to require all her attention.

A grey light began to be visible through the windows. Whereupon horse blankets were pressed into service and the accusing daylight was shut out. Some of the more conservative members of the party began to think of home. Among these was Ebenezer Wopp who had not danced since the opening set. He had sat for some hours in a comatose condition, except when he was aroused for a few moments by a nudge or pinch administered by his energetic wife.

"What's the use of goin' to a dance and settin' sleepin' like one of them spinxes, Ebenezer?" she expostulated as she roused him from his slumbers. The good lady

herself had danced almost incessantly until her face had taken on the hue of a ripe pippin.

The sun rose over the hills and his presence could be ignored no longer. As the Wopp family were driving silently home in the chilly morning, Moses, growing reminiscent, remarked with a yawn:

"Anyhow, Mar, that fust punkin pie Par got was a howlin' success."

## CHAPTER VI.

### AN EVENING IN THE WOPP PARLOR.

The broad shaft of sunlight that flooded the dining-room where Nell Gordon sat was suddenly darkened. Looking up she saw the tall straight figure of Howard Eliot at the doorway.

"Lan' sakes, here's friend neighbor," exclaimed Mrs. Wopp entering the room from the kitchen, "yer jist in time to help this here pore overworked teacher with some papers she brung home from the school."

"P'raps I'll hinder more than help," Howard answered, grasping Mrs. Wopp's outstretched hand and looking questioningly at Nell.

"The work I am at now Howard, requires mostly a sense of humor. Just look at this and ask yourself how I manage to keep my face straight sometimes at school." Howard took the paper handed to him and had hardly read a line before his risibility was tickled.

Moses and Betty, hearing what promised to add spice to their evening, quickly entered the room. Mrs. Wopp who always had to know the joke, conspired at once to get rid of the youngsters.

"Moses, you git to the barn an' hunt the aigs, an' min' you look in the haystack; that ole yaller hen has been wantin' ter set in the nigh corner of it."

"I did hunt the aigs," lied the unhappy Moses who was afraid he was going to miss something.

"Then where are they?" demanded Mrs. Wopp. "You are as bad as Anias and Sapphire who was carried out feet foremost. Go when I tell you. An' you Betty, go upstairs an' mend that orful, yawnin' gap in yer stockin'. Now we hev got rid of the younguns Howard, will you read out what you was larfin' at?"

Thus adjured, Howard began, while Mrs. Wopp leaned back in her chair rocking vigorously.

"The cow is a useful animal. It has short legs and a cupple horns sometimes very sharp. Some cows is black some is

red, a cow can Ball very loud. If you hear a cow Ball very loud keep on the other side of the fense, she may have lost her calf and that is why she is Balling very loud.

Cows have a long tale. They wave it and it keeps there back cool, sometimes they wave it to keep off flies and other insecks. Cows cannot run as fast as a hoarse but if she is chasing you she seems to be running very fast. If she chases you pick up a tin can or pale and hit on it with a stone. The cow will then stampeed. Cows have four feet called hoofs. They are useful for walking this is all I know about cows."

"Well now Howard Eliot I carnt see nothin' in that to larf at. It is grand readin'. Do read another," said Mrs. Wopp.

Picking up a second paper at random, "This is a composition on Alfred the Great," he explained.

"Alfred the Grate was a good king. He had a lot of trubel in his rane. The Danes had come to Ingland and peeple did not no how to read and rite. He bilt some skools and men called munks showed the peeple how to read and rite the Danes were very

crool they killed a lot of men and Alfred the Grate had to run away and hide in a slew. One day a woman where he borded asked him to turn some pancakes and King Alfred the Grate forgot to turn the pancakes and they were burnt and the woman boxed his ears and would not bord him no more. Alfred the Grate beet the Danes."

"I am not going to let you see any more compositions," exclaimed Nell, "You are just making fun of my poor children."

"Ho ard Eliot may larf, but I think these writin's is real clever," Mrs. Wopp grew thoughtful, "Moses' Aunt Lucindy's cousin, by marriage, had talents fer literatoor. But the pore girl married an undertaker an' she writ no more."

"Let's all go to the parlor, Mar, and hev some music. It isn't every evenin' we hev company," said Mr. Wopp.

"Ef you wish it, Ebenezer," responded his spouse though still somewhat absorbed in the frustrated hopes of her relative, "jist wait till I drawr up the blinds."

The Wopp parlor was seldom entered, except on very special occasions or when

Mrs. Wopp with formality and no undue haste dusted the furniture. The room had an air of solemnity and gloom, absent in the cheerful dining-room where the family usually sat. A homemade rag carpet covered the floor. Six slippery, horsehair chairs, one of them a rocker, and a horsehair couch, which did not invite confidence, were ranged stiffly around the sides of the room. In one corner was an ancient organ, wheezy and querulous with neglect, and in another stood a lofty what-not, on whose numerous shelves were deposited the family treasures. Here, was a woolly lamb at one time beloved of Moses; there his tin savings bank. Stiffly upright stood Betty's wax doll Hannah, seldom played with and then only for a few minutes at a time. Mrs. Wopp was represented by a few shell boxes and a match box of china flanked by a sleek china cat.

In the very centre of the room stood a small table swathed in a hand-painted felt drape. On this reposed the huge family Bible in which was chronicled the marriages, births and deaths of the Wopp family during the last three generations.

On the wall hung a gilt-framed portrait, which rumor said represented Ebenezer Wopp, a wreath of carefully made wax flowers, a silver coffin-plate framed and bearing the name and date of demise of Mr. Wopp's mother, and two or three colored chromos.

"Betty, play us a toon," requested Mr. Wopp who was very fond of music.

Without further urging the child began to pick out with one finger a complicated melody which Mrs. Wopp assured the audience was "Dare to be a Daniel."

"Aint that wonderful Miss Gordon? An' Betty never had a lesson in her life. She jist naterly takes to music," said Mrs. Wopp complacently.

"It certainly is wonderful," agreed Nell with perfect truth.

"Do you know that piece of music called 'The Rose of Larst Summer'?" inquired the musical connoisseur.

Nell confessed she had heard of it.

"Will you please play it fer us then, it is so touchin'. You will find the music on the organ."

While the strains of this enlivening classic were issuing from the asthmatic instrument, Moses and Betty in the more secular atmosphere of the hall were trying to fit the time to "Old Dan Tucker" their favorite dance.

"Now ef you would jist play 'Home Sweet Home' with variations, my dear, we'll arterwards hev a game of crokinole. Crokinole is sich an amusin' game."

Miss Gordon complied, then followed the old favorite with a two-step played in as sprightly a manner as the organ would allow.

The young dancers in the hall found the change of music decidedly exhilarating, as an occasional whoop testified.

"Bully fer you, 's Gordon," shouted the excited Moses leaping furiously. "Keep her goin'. Ole Dan Tucker jist fits that toon."

"Shame on you Moses, rampagin' an' bellerin' there like a gang of coyotes," remonstrated his mother.

The strains of "Red Wing" having died away, Mrs. Wopp busied herself setting up

the crokinole board. "Me and Par won't play, jist the young folks," she announced.

"Hurry Betty and set opposite me so's we kin play together," said Moses, unwittingly giving Cupid his innings.

"You're a brilliant youth Moses," smiled Howard approvingly, "and sure to get on in life. You don't appreciate your own cleverness half as much as I do."

Moses stared, wondering at this unusual compliment.

In the meantime Mr. Wopp sitting precariously on the edge of the sofa was examining for at least the two-hundredth time the red plush album which contained the records of the Wopp family, past and present, in picture form. He looked long and earnestly at a tin-type representing a plump, velvet-coated, mop-haired boy of twelve. He sighed deeply.

"I must of looked like that Lize or the picter couldn't of been took." Ruefully he rubbed his bald crown.

"The fleetin' of youth is most sartin," answered his wife, coining this epigram on the shortness of life's spring-time, and sigh-

ing as she spoke. The good lady herself was looking through a stereoscope at some views and finding one of Niagara Falls she endeavored to cheer her despondent husband.

"Do you remember when we went to Niagary Falls on our weddin' tower, Ebenezer? We seen this here whirlpool an' Goat Island an' the hull show. Them was the happy days."

Mrs. Wopp rose from her chair and seating herself on the sofa beside her husband took his thin hand in her substantial one, squeezing it openly.

Out of the tail of her eye Betty noted this little touch of sentiment and was much impressed.

"Be keerful how you shoot that checker Betty or we're goin' to git beat," admonished Moses. He found himself opposed to no mean antagonists.

Awakened to the fact of her son's existence and perhaps as an antidote to her unusual display of sentiment, Mrs. Wopp spoke rather sharply. "Moses, time you an' Betty was in bed. You won't want to

git up in the mornin' an' milk the cows."

Later left alone in the lower part of the house she stood arms akimbo in the middle of the kitchen gazing at the door through which Nell Gordon had just departed. Shaking her head she said mysteriously, "I kalkerlate as how things is a-settin' in that way."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE LITTLE CHURCH IN THE COULEE.

From the lower slopes of the Cedar Hills issued many wide wooded ravines. Of these none were prettier than Spring Coulee which even in winter retained its attractiveness, having a goodly sprinkling of evergreen trees among the poplars and cottonwoods lining its sides. A grassy level formed the bottom of the coulee. Through the centre of this a little crystal-clear stream, rising in the hills behind and swelled by an occasional spring which gushed from the sides of the ravine, danced over its pebbly bed to join Berry Creek a mile away.

The coulee was a sheltered nook when bitter winds swept the higher grounds above; it was cool when scorching heat yellowed the grasses of the plain.

So a little church had been built there. The four walls of peeled logs carefully chinked with plaster were now grey and

weathered. Inside of the building the red-draped altar, pulpit and reading-desk occupied at least one-third of the available space. There were pews to seat a score of people and behind these was a large heater. The uneven walls were whitewashed. In the windows, three on each side, were alternate blue and white panes of glass.

Mr. Wells the clergyman was of English birth, very conservative and inclined to be shy. He was unusually tall with broad shoulders. Mrs. Wopp once said of him, "When Mr. Wells gits his gownd on, he's the hull lan'scape." The deeply pious lady seldom criticized things ecclesiastical; but she had "feelin's that ef Ebenezer Wopp hed of took to larnin' like his Mar wished, he'd of looked amazin' well in that pulpit, better nor Mr. Wells."

One brilliant Sunday Mr. Wells paced up and down in the sunshine before his little church. An ardent lover of nature he was admiring the beautiful shades of the foliage on either hand and the gorgeous masses of golden-rod that lifted feathery heads to the sun. Presently seeing two or three vehicles approaching he retired into the church.

Down the road came a democrat. In the front seat sat Mr. and Mrs. Wopp resplendent in Sunday attire and both wearing bouquets of bright nasturtiums. Behind them sat Moses and Betty also dressed in their best. Moses was cogitating, "Its a blessin' Betty's eyebrows hev growed out. She cut an orful figger without them." Keeping pace with the democrat; but roving here and there in search of gophers ran Jethro enjoying himself mightily.

Not far behind the democrat came a light buggy drawn by a team of greys. Howard Eliot and Nell Gordon sat therein.

Next followed a buckboard gaily painted red. Mrs. Mifsud and her daughter Maria aged fourteen who had taken a "quarter" of music lessons and was now the organist of the church, were occupants. Between them was wedged the pet of the family St. Elmo Mifsud a child of four. St. Elmo wore long chestnut curls and an angelic expression. Clarence Egerton Crump, Mrs. Mifsud's nephew who was visiting his aunt and cousins, accompanied the family on his wheel.

Behind the Mifsuds followed a few other parishioners.

The service began and was proceeding with its accustomed smoothness and decorum when a most unseemly interruption occurred. Maria Mifsud had long entertained suspicions that all was not well with the interior of the organ. Lately a few of the notes had refused to make a sound, and to-day there seemed to be more of these delinquents than ever. While Mr. Bliggins was collecting the offering Maria began to play a voluntary carefully practised beforehand. She had fairly launched into "One Sweetly Solemn Thought" when suddenly she discerned peering curiously at her through one of the round holes which adorn the front of the instrument the small bright eye of a mouse. The intruder was apparently quite calm and self-possessed. Not so Maria. With a piercing shriek she jumped from the organ stool and rushing to the back of the church leaped wildly to the seat beside her scandalized and uncomprehending mother. Almost at the same moment the offending mouse scampered down the in-

ternal anatomy of the organ and gained freedom through an exit beside the pedals. Mr. Wells turned crimson and stood on one foot. Most of the ladies of the congregation drew their feet up on the seat beside them. The mouse ran furiously along the sacred aisles of the church.

In the meantime, affairs outside were in a more lethargic condition. The Wopp's steady-going brown team Josh and Jake tied to a wheel of the democrat stood enjoying a small pile of hay on the ground before them. Beneath the democrat sat Jethro watching with eager gaze for the reappearance of his friends. Occasionally he administered chastisement to an impertinent fly which after buzzing around in a tantalizing manner ventured to settle on his nose or ear. After an hour of intense boredom he rose, stretched himself, yawned; then began to walk sedately towards the church. He intended to find out what was going on anyway. He had been told to watch the democrat; but there were limits to even canine patience. He reached the church door just in time to see a small, badly-frightened

mouse running madly up the aisle. Quick as a flash he gave chase, uttering short, excited yelps as he ran. The mouse redoubled its speed. So did Jethro. Round and round the church they raced. In his excitement and mad haste Jethro, intent only on his immediate task, ran violently against Mr. Bliggins who stood transfixed in the aisle, his work only half completed. Though he managed to retain his balance the collection plate was jolted from his hand and in its clattering descent was accompanied by the tinkling of a small shower of silver coins which rolled here and there over the floor of the church.

"By heck!" ejaculated Mr. Wopp who sat in the front seat beside his wife and Betty. Then he glanced hastily around to see if anyone had noticed his irreverent outburst. But no one had. They were all too intent on other matters.

After several rounds the mouse, at last seeing the open door, darted through it to freedom. Jethro a short distance behind assayed to follow; but taking a short cut under the back seat on which huddled the

Mifsud family he unexpectedly encountered his ancient enemy Snappy the Mifsud's collie. Snappy, who had been roused from his slumbers under the buckboard by the commotion in the church, had crept in unnoticed and had been an interested spectator of the proceedings. Jethro's always superabundant energies were now turned in a new direction. Snarls and snaps and the fiercest growls testified to the bitterness of the feud.

Moses Wopp, sitting with Clarence Crump on a bench near the door had hitherto been enjoying himself hugely. Now fearing injury to his beloved dog he rushed boldly to the rescue. Clarence followed more slowly. It was but the work of a few moments to separate the combatants and remove them from the church. Jethro borne away to a safe distance in the arms of Moses still uttered occasional rumbling growls, each individual hair on his spine standing erect. Clarence kept a firm hold on Snappy's collar.

"Jeth could whip your ole mongrel; but I dont warnt him bit up," called Moses

over his shoulder as he walked away. To this taunt Clarence replied only with a hideous grimace.

Inside the church matters were beginning to resume a normal condition. But Mr. Wells still badly shaken and feeling unable to proceed announced, "My friends we will conclude our service with a hymn. Will some one suggest a suitable one."

"The strife is o'er, the battle done," recommended Mrs. Wopp without hesitation. As Maria could not be persuaded to approach the organ the singing was lustily led by Mrs. Wopp and under her able leadership maintained the most vigorous proportions.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### BETTY VISITS THE CITY OF HER DREAMS.

Zalhambra was a vaudeville artist. His was the star act on each bill. He was undeniably a genius; it needed but a few bars of fortissimo plus crescendo to realize that he was a virtuoso of the first rank. When he played a Rag the audience shouted with delight; but when he sprinkled torrential cadenzas through the dizzying syncopation, like some mighty giant tossing meteors into a handful of fire-crackers, something like an electric shock stirred his hearers.

He sat by the table in his dressing-room with angry storm-swept countenance. He had been capturing loud plaudits with his rag-time, until intoxicated with success, he swept into a tornado of music by Moskowski. The applause died away; two ladies in the front row began chatting. The enraged artist jumped from the piano-stool, and shouting "Pigs!" raced from the platform.

For five hundred dollars a week he had pranced to the admiring vaudeville audience; but once let the artist lay bare his soul in real music and whispering reaches his ear. But there was no use complaining, no one could understand his disgust.

"Ugh! Confound their impudence, I'll make them listen yet to something else than rag."

In the midst of these reflections, the trombone player of the orchestra came to him.

"Come home to dinner with me, Mr. Zalhambra, you'll p'raps find some folks there that will appreciate the dope you hand out."

The disgusted artist got up and with a huge hand wiped his handkerchief across his perspiring brow. He was short and very thick set, with prominent forehead, bulging black eyes, coarse nose, thick red lips.

"Thank you Mr. Newman, you're a prince."

In his overcoat Mr. Zalhambra seemed to fill the doorway as Mrs. Newman greeted him. A moment's private talk and the hostess understood the situation. From the drawing-room a ripple of childish laughter reached their ears.

"Didn't know you had a family, Mr. Newman."

"Oh that is a little girl visiting us. My wife's cousin is spending a week in Calgary and has brought an animated bunch of Alberta sage-brush with her.

School having been closed a week for repairs Miss Gordon had brought Betty to the shining city of her childish dreams.

Everything at the dinner table was in keeping to Betty's eyes, from the translucent china cups to the dainty blown bubbles of confection served with ice-cream; all so fragile that even one of her small brown fingers might crush them. She laughed as she thought of the annihilating effect, should Moses appear. The ices and the angel cake and the concocted kisses of white-of-egg confirmed in her mind the suspicion that her wonderful holiday was a dream.

"So your name is Betty Wopp?"

Betty gazed shyly at her inquisitor. Her brown eyes sparkled with the adventure of meeting a real live piannerist, as she called him. Dinner was over and Mr. Zalhambra stood before the fire in the drawing-room

grate. Stooping to warm his large white hands over the flame, his hypnotic eyes reflected strangely the glow of the fire. He watched Nell Gordon as she sat stroking the flowing fair tresses of Betty.

She was dressed in a simple velvet gown the color that the twilight sky takes just before the stars come out, sapphire blue. Her red pouting lips were curved in a caressing smile, and her eyes rimmed with their black curling lashes were full of the joy of life. Betty's verdict, although punctuated by an interrogation point, had been correct when she first put the question to Moses, "Aint our new teacher lovely with her shinin' blue eyes?"

Mr. Zalhambra's gaze fell full on the girl and her color heightened under his ardent look.

"Have you been to the show this week, Miss Gordon?" He turned from the fire and stood with his back to the cheerful blaze.

"Not yet, but they must all go to-night."

Al Newman arranged all the theatre parties for his wife and guests. He opened

up the piano as he spoke and turned to the musician.

"Some of the real stuff," he requested, "just to make these folks realize they haven't begun to live yet."

The pianist sat easily at the piano and began the Moskowski selection that had failed to create the expected furore in the afternoon. A cadenza that shivered down the spine like spray from a glacial torrent wakened the room. Then he plunged into the first theme. His small audience listened spell-bound. Betty's eyes followed the fingers that leaped over the ivory keys like white flame. A subtle current began to play in the room. Steadily it grew in power. Magnetism to the nth degree was being generated. A tremendous chord brought the music to a close and the pianist to his feet. Something in Nell's glance inspired him. He whirled about the room whistling and imitating some of the cadenzas and other passages from the selection just played. He gesticulated wildly with his hands, the passion for dramatic music oozing from his pores.

"Ah Miss Gordon, I see you love the music too," he murmured in her ear.

Al Newman took him by the arm, "We'll have to leave for the show in eight minutes old boy, just a little funeral of your own now."

The pianist took a long look at Nell who had been visibly affected by his playing. Misgivings that date back to Eden were leaping into life in his breast. He had been in love more times than he could count, but here was the girl after all. He began a Scherzo of his own composition. Youth gathering flowers at the open mouth of a volcano. The melody was born to live forever. He was a genius. Now Nell knew it and her soul worshipped genius. Howard Eliot was far from her thoughts as she listened to the enchanting chain of melodies that poured forth.

"Sit near the front so you can give me inspiration, Miss Gordon," the musician said in an undertone as he stood hat in hand ready to hurry off for the first show.

"Mrs. Newman, may I come again," he turned confidentially to his hostess, "I am

head over ears in love with your charming cousin."

Mrs. Newman smiled knowingly; she was familiar with his type, here to-day and gone to-morrow, with falling in love a convenient habit to give zest to the round of vaudeville performances. Mr. Zalhambra caught her smile of incredulity and murmured, "This time it is really fatal."

The theatre was entirely darkened long enough to arrange the grand piano. The pianist approached the instrument to the plaudits of the crowded house. The insult to his audience in the afternoon had succeeded in spreading his fame and a packed house greeted his evening performance. He turned and gazed intently toward the audience. He caught Nell's glance, who sat near the front as he had wished, and he smiled an acknowledgment of her presence.

He outrivalled all his efforts of the week, being recalled again and again. Betty was delighted with the nods and smiles that the great man was directing towards Nell and herself and Mrs. Newman; but from his attitude and the blushes of Nell, more than

one in the audience knew who was the fountain of his inspiration. The hopes of one stalwart young man in particular rapidly fell to zero.

The green-eyed monster, always seeking prey, had at last found a victim, and proceeded in true green-eyed fashion to wage ruthless warfare.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE VAUDEVILLE SHOW.

So close was the affiliation between Betty and Moses that exactly three-quarters of an hour after her departure with Miss Gordon for Calgary the impetuous youth was at the rancher's home trying to inveigle him into a conspiracy to follow the holiday-makers to that city of dazzling attractions.

Nothing loth to keep the distance between himself and Nell at a minimum, Howard Eliot entered with zest into the boy's plans.

"Mar said she'd like to see the sights too onct again," said Moses, watching with the air of an investigator the wart on his hand grow pale as he punched it with his finger, "It seemed so lonesome-like soon as Betty an' Miss Gordon left, Mar says, says she, 'Let's go plum to Calgary ourselves'." This diplomatic stroke crowned Moses' arguments and his case was won.

As Mrs. Wopp adjusted her bonnet before leaving the house, she gave minute instructions to Mr. Wopp.

"You'd think this here day's trip to Calgary was a journey to Jeroosalem," he complained, all his slips of paper used up in jottings to remind him of duties imposed.

"Well I only go 'way about onct in a blue moon," declared Mrs. Wopp, "an' I feel so unsartin 'bout everything. Here we are a pack of Gadarene swine goin' orff to a great city to eat husks I s'pose like the prodigal son. Never mind Ebenezer we'll come back right glad I'll bet to the fatted calf." She pinched his ear in an elephantine playfulness as though he might be the fatted calf himself.

Howard Eliot guided his charges through the mazes of the city to a restaurant. Moses with the perennial appetite of fourteen ate silently and steadily, not omitting one item on the menu. He gorged.

Mrs. Wopp's bonnet with its imitation osprey looked as though adorned with fragments of barbed-wire. Her jet earrings seemed entirely superfluous as the lobes of her generous ears glowed like rubies.

Howard sat back in his chair and thought of the possibilities of seeing Nell. He re-

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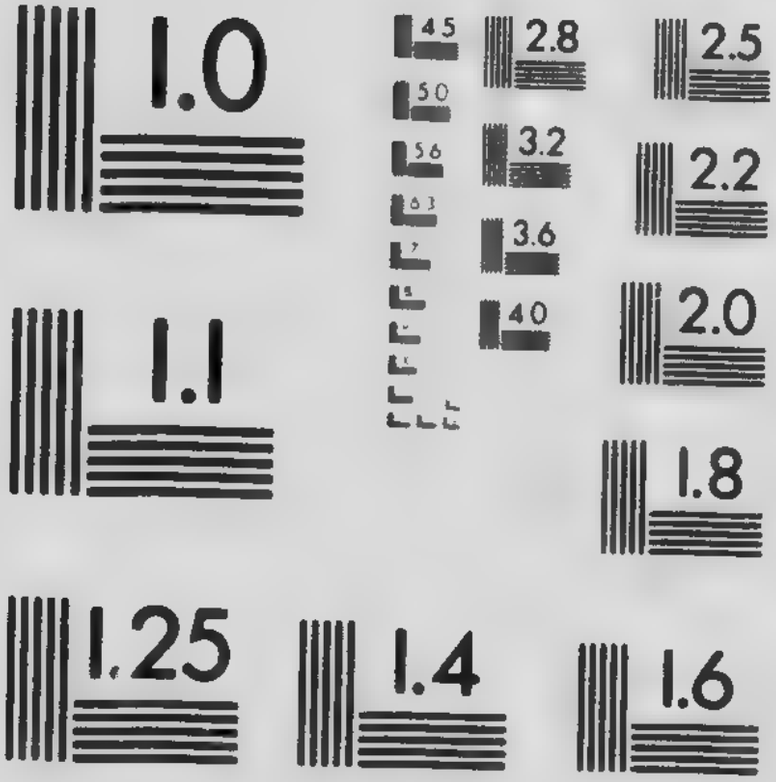


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flected that they were as good as engaged. Mrs. Wopp had given her diagnosis of the case enigmatically, perhaps, but with a degree of accuracy denoting keen observation on the evening of his last visit at the Wopp household. For fully a fraction of a minute Nell had let him hold her hand, and then her face all dimpling had turned to say good-night. He was rehearsing what he should say next time she dimpled so irresistibly and he breathed anathemas on his assinine conduct in being so shy and tardy. He was brought to the immediate present by Moses who was regarding an ice-cream soda with suspicion.

"This froth looks like soapsuds," he complained.

"Soap-suds is Moses' strong weakness," commented Mrs. Wopp, laughing till her fat shoulders quaked perilously.

To stay the cloud that began to gather over Moses' brow, Howard suggested going to see a vaudeville show.

"Oh Mar," asked Moses as they passed a brilliantly colored and illuminated poster, "Is them the actor people?"

"Them's thum," was the sophisticated answer.

Fate led the trio to the theatre where Mr. Zalhambra was playing. Howard took his friends to a box and no sooner were they seated than he espied Nell and Betty.

The orchestra were tuning up, that delightful tilting at the notes that precedes the overture. To Moses were revealed such vistaed glimpses of trees and mountains and rivers as his young eyes had never seen. He saw nothing but the gorgeous scenery and the blaze of lights, and heard nothing but the booming of the drum in the overture. Then becoming more used to the glare and clamor, he cocked one eye aloft and saw youths of his own age eating peanuts in the gallery. It made his mouth water. He surveyed the obnoxious offenders however with the nonchalance of one who has already dined sumptuously. Outwardly Moses was an overgrown, freckle-faced, well-fed boy of commonplace propensities; inwardly he was a battery fully charged.

The first act over, a troop of black-faced comedians occupied the stage.

"Jist look at that black man's chest swellin' in an' out like an accorjun," remarked Mrs. Wopp highly entertained with the sight. Moses leaned over till he was in danger of capsizing. His eager look trailed off into a point of vacuity when the performers left the stage. Bewilderment had left his eyes incapable of properly focussing. Suddenly he caught sight of Betty and he could hardly repress an exclamation of joy as he pointed her out to his mother.

"Dont Betty look jist too sweet," she murmured when she had finally located the child, "Her hair looks as ef she had got tangled up in the milky way an' there was nothin' on it but star-dust."

The pianist walked on the stage as the eyes of Mrs. Wopp and Moses rested on Betty. Howard Eliot had not taken his gaze from Nell Gordon expecting momentarily to catch her glance and to be rewarded by a smile. A smile radiated her fair face, but alas! It was not for him.

As the program went on Moses finally caught the eye of his little sister. The joyful news was passed on and Nell looked up,

but it was a disconcertingly cold look that returned her inquiring gaze at Howard. So frigid was his expression that she did not attempt to turn her head in that direction again. From time to time Betty turned to wave her hand thereby causing much merriment among those who watched her childish enjoyment.

When the program was over Moses noticed enviously that Betty was so close to the orchestra that her ear was almost in the trombone.

"Wisht I hed a chance to holler into one of them brass dinner-horns, too," he grumbled.

Mrs. Newman and Nell waited after the show for the unique trio that had occupied the box but they were nowhere to be seen. Howard Eliot had whisked his companions off under a pretext of urgent business.

The next day was spent in sight seeing but visions of neglected poultry and cows haunted the anxious housewife, and notwithstanding the expostulations of Moses they started home that evening.

Mrs. Wopp surmised from the dejected

appearance of the young rancher, coupled with the smiles over the footlights which she had observed with rising wrath, that trouble was brewing, and she whispered audibly to herself, "A musician's orl right on a pianner stool, but when it comes to gittin' up in the mornin' an' choppin' wood to bile the kettle give me a farmer." Her cogitations became louder. "I s'pose he thinks cos he has a percession of carpital letters arter his name he can git anyone fer the arskin'. When he smiled so at our Miss Gordon I could of slain him with the jawrbone of an arss." In her championship of Howard's interests, Mrs. Wopp became an ardent villifier of the pianist and she administered an oral castigation with feminine vigor.

"That man Zalhambone's playin' rasped all up an' down my spine," she criticized. Then harking back to thrills she really had felt despite her prejudice, she admitted grudgingly, "My, but his han's did fly over them keys permiscuous-like."

"He smiles sich a toothy grin," commented Moses.

"Put a nose an' eyes over his own pianner an' you'd think there's the man hisself," flung back Mrs. Wopp.

Presently Moses' thoughts returned to the meals provided by the restaurants of Calgary, and he decided it would be a good pastime for some rainy day to relate it all to Betty especially about the "little minners suffercated in rice an' tryin' to climb onto rafts of lemon-slices."

Howard Eliot having left his charges safely at home went to his lonely ranch haunted by rebellious thoughts which Mrs. Wopp would have translated, "Here endeth my knowledge of the female speeshie."

## CHAPTER X.

### THE CIRCUS.

Mrs. Wopp came down the path walking as briskly as her generous avoirdupois would permit. She was followed by Ebenezer Wopp whose coat seemed to cover some abnormal growth as though a watermelon might be lodged there. It was a bundle of socks for his wife to mend during her visit to Mrs. Mifsud's ranch.

On such visits Mrs. Wopp enjoyed herself hugely. Her volubility was overpowering; as Mrs. Mifsud had been known to remark, "Not even a comma was there to clutch at to make good ones escape." The faster her needle flew the faster raced her tongue. In view of the impending visit Mrs. Mifsud had surreptitiously stuffed one ear with cotton batting so that in the event of an extremely sanguinary onslaught, so to speak, at least one rampart of defence could be instantaneously thrown up. Ebenezer Wopp unlike his wife was expecting

nothing but an afternoon of self-effacement though prepared to secretly admire to the full Mrs. Wopp's sprightly conversation.

Moses and Betty were left to mind house, the admonishings of Mrs. Wopp being seasoned with picturesque if carelessly applied texts. The envious might hurl hisses, but Moses and Betty were invulnerable to all such assaults upon their anticipations of the day's freedom with its already planned joys.

"Now Mosey, you be ticket man at the gate an' I'll hev the circus all ready," cried Betty bounding into the house in the shortest possible time after the departure of the elderly merrymakers.

She emerged from the house her hair coiled on the top of her head and decorated with a strip of shining silver from an empty biscuit tin. Thus had she seen a circus lady dressed on one never-to-be-forgotten day. Around her small body was draped a yellow silk shawl of Mrs. Wopps. Her feet were encased in a pair of Ebenezer Wopp's reddest socks, bound on by bright green ribbon ripped from her winter hat.

From her fair hair floated a white aigret made of chicken feathers hastily wired together. Moses needed no aigret as a strand of red hair stood upright from the crown of his head.

"Here Mosey," said Betty, "is a tin crown. You can fasten it on with this wire. See?"

In a moment the obliging boy's head was surmounted by an empty tomato can, and under the aegis of "Whacker Brand" he became attendant to the circus manageress. Thus helmeted he stood and gazed at Betty as though the hinges of his jaw were loosening.

"Stir yerself Moses or I'll hev the zoo ready afore yer tickets are writ."

Moses began cutting make-believe tickets using the paper and scissors thrust into his hand by the capable manageress of the show.

Presently he raised his head and was confronted by Job the turkey wearing a tiny bright pink hat and a green ribbon round his neck. An antimacassar bearing wide magenta and red crocheted stripes covered

his back causing him to strut with peacock pride.

"Dont Job look jist like Mariar Mifsud goin' to meetin'," gurgled Betty.

Next appeared Jethro in a high state of hilarity with a harness made of Moses' skate-straps and with a tiny doll dressed to represent a monkey bound to his back.

"Jethro barks with his mouth an' smiles with his tail," said Betty.

"His tail's druv in too far fer to waggle much though," returned Moses eyeing the diminutive stump.

As many of the hens and chickens as could be persuaded were ushered into the yard to add to the numerical strength of the menagerie.

Betty kept her tour de force till the last and astounded Moses by riding into the yard on the back of a large cow. Molly had been padded to represent a camel and Betty rode perched insecurely on the hump of the lordly creature, holding Mrs. W[illiams]'s treasured red parasol to give the effect of a canopy.

Molly enjoyed the attentions of Bet[ty]

and contentedly chewed her cud. Whenever Betty leaned forward to caress the camel, Molly rolled out some square inches of tongue and licked the glowing cheek of her little mistress. An altogether adorable if somewhat familiar camel was the old black cow.

"Oh, Betty, you got ole man Noer stuck in the shade. His ark never turned out sich a fine camel as yourn, I bet," cried Moses gleefully as he proceeded to sell tickets and to admit an astonishingly large number of imaginary people into the circus grounds.

"Now who wants to ride the camel? Who wants to ride the swayin' tossin' ship of the desert?" Betty turned to her swarming audience; then to Moses she whispered as though she might be overheard, "You step forward an' pay me two bits fer a ride." Moses put a ticket into Betty's hand and, not to be outdone in bravery, mounted the single-humped camel. Molly forgot her training in the sandy desert and lurched sadly.

"My feet's purty well jolted up inter my

head," cried the uncomfortable rider. But Betty insisted on his getting full value for his money, and dared him to descend until the round of the arena had been completed.

"Who wants to drive my trained bear an' monkey? Only a dime stranger, only a dime!"

Moses, hot-headed youth, squandered another coin for the thrilling experience of tearing over the bare ea-th holding in Jethro by the reins, and using words of sinister meaning to the unwieldy monster. The monkey swayed painfully from the back of the excited Jethro.

By this time Betty was getting hoarse and instructed her perspiring assistant what next to shout and the most fetching modulations of voice to use. The change in program was bellowed in Moses' raucous voice, "An orstrich here, only fifty cents to see a live trained orstrich!" A huge swallow and he continued, "Brought from Carliforny and trained by the famousest lady Betty Wopp." After further instructions he went on, "This orstrich is named Job Wopp. He kin lay the largest aig in the world, kin run faster

than any horse, could strike you dead with the hoof of his clawr." Further whispering on the part of Betty and the address concluded, "Yet, ladies and gents, he is as gentle as a spring chicking."

Everything was going smoothly when suddenly a catastrophe stopped short the circus, and left Moses greatly distressed. He inwardly complained that never yet was he "havin' a good time but some orful thing happened to put a cloud over the sun."

The hens and chickens that had been pressed into the ranks of the circus performers were crowding round a swill-bucket which Moses had left tilted at a precarious angle on an upturned soap-box. In its zig-zag gyrations round the yard, the ostrich, to avoid the ubiquitous fowl, ran against the bucket and the odoriferous contents were splashed over the yellow-draped circus lady. The contents of the swill-pail trickled down Betty's finery and dropped sadly from the pink headgear of the ostrich.

The audience made an impetuous dash to the scene of the fatality and as he stooped over the dripping yellow-frocked figure a

jolt of even greater proportions upset the bucket entirely; a deluge of the unsavory mixture almost knocked off his knightly helmet and trickled from its rusty edges till he looked like a very rotund and rakish Don Quixote.

Job's feathers that to Betty's eyes had taken on the glory of ostrich plumes, drooped disconsolately, while Moses denounced in fluent language the stupidity of the fowl that had caused the unfortunate episode. He declared loudly that he would like to wring the aggressive portions of those feathered culprits. The group stood for a moment, a miniature Vesuvius erupting lava and ashes, while Moses wrung the offending liquid from Betty's yellow drape and the magenta antimacassar. His sense of the ludicrous however overcame his wrath, "My Eye Betty!" he cried, "I near kerlapse every time I draw up my curtings on Job."

Enjoying the spectacle, Henry the pet rooster stood on the rail-fence crowing lustily in chanticleer derision.

The resourceful Betty was not to be un-

done by this embarrassing accident. She used the silk shawl to groom the ostrich and to mop the disfiguring stains from Moses' face. The helmet was discarded and the aigret of red hair rose instantly undaunted, waving a lively accompaniment to the boy's continued exertions to follow the pace set by Betty's imagination.

"Yer a reglar Mis' Barnum," he praised. Whereupon the enterprising program-maker began to devise new and more wonderful side-shows for her admirer.

In the matter of the next adventure, Moses' feet were fast approaching that degree known as freezing point. But spurred on by the resolute will of his sister he rose to the occasion of a chariot race, adapted from "Ben Hur." They had never forgotten the thrill they had experienced when one day at Mrs. Mifsud's house the nephew of that good lady, with city-bred art, had recited in melodramatic fashion "Ben Hur's Chariot Race."

"You hitch Jethro to yer ole 'xpress waggon, 'n I'll hitch Job to a prune-box with spool-wheels," suggested Betty.

Discarded shoe-laces, rope and trunk-straps came hastily into requisition. The vociferations of Moses were so severe on his vocal chords that he found it necessary to visit the pump.

"Gosh! My throat feels like I'd been garglin' with a bumble bee," he exclaimed. Greatly refreshed, he did full justice to the difficult roles of combined driver and audience. Jethro, delighted with the new game, tore madly round the yard, barking shrilly and demanding more speed. But Job, running sadly corner-wise, was destined from the start for a losing race.

"Never mind Jobie, we want Jethro to win anyway, don't we?" said Betty, presenting to the turkey her pocket filled with grain.

"Put a crown of pickled olerves on me," demanded Moses, "me 'n Jethro beat." He stood before his sister mopping his face. The express waggon with a wheel off was overturned and a frightened. "Cheep, cheep, cheep" came from beneath it.

"My racer has only one eye anyways," said Betty defiantly as she twined a piece of

nasturtium vine round the noble brow of the victor.

"What's next?"

Moses was not easily satisfied. His attitude was always that of one who has dined on an undersized shrimp while expecting a ten-course banquet.

"Cleanin' up's next, Mose. Take my device an' shoo away them hens an' chickings. Mar'll be home soon."

"Singe my hair ef I do, let's hev some more doin's," rebelled Moses.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when the sound of an approaching team was heard. Betty eyed ruefully the silk shawl she had flung on the ground.

"She'll be orful mad," prophecied Moses.

"You young Hottentots, wot youse been up to?" All too soon Moses' prophecy proved true.

Mrs. Wopp's eyes fell on the stained shawl.

"Nothin'."

At this mendacious statement Mrs. Wopp turned on her offspring a withering glance.

"Jevver see sich a useless boy? Been learnin' spellin's orl day, I 'xpect."

Viewing the upturned swill-pail, she suddenly became cynical.

"It's my doin's, Mar," said Betty, "I made it orl up outer my head."

"She's a reglar show-lady," defended Moses. This was hardly a strategic move from Moses, as he had just asserted they had been doing nothing.

Mrs. Wopp was an incurable optimist, although the citadel of her optimism was being assailed. Turning her wrathful gaze from Moses, her eye lighted on the soiled pink hat and antimacassar still worn by Job. She burst into a hearty laugh and turned to Betty.

"Yer a limb o' Satan orl right. The shawl was needin' dyein' anyway. I'll jist make it green. Yer Par used to say I looked right harnsome in green, so I'll s'prise him with a new shawl over my shoulders." She turned to the dog. The strenuous exertions of the afternoon had noticeably reduced his girth.

"This here dorg is clean tuckered out," she declared, "ef he swallered a green pea, you'd see it goin' down orl the way."

In a few days the sight of his wife wrapped in a shawl the color of an unripe cucumber had a rejuvenating influence upon Ebenezer Wopp. He did not say much, being a man of few words, but his sentiments were inscribed in cramped illegible writing on a slip of paper to be handed down to posterity.

## CHAPTER XI.

### JONAH AND THE WHALE.

Mrs. Wopp had a request from Mrs. Williams. She, the requestor, was ill with a touch of "pewmonia," as Mrs. Wopp afterward related, and would Mrs. Wopp the requestee oblige by taking her Sunday-school class for the following Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. Williams was a round-faced dimpled persuasive lady; and Mrs. Wopp, being non-coax-proof and flattered by the request, consented.

That ardent daughter of Jubal sighed, not for the encroachment on her Sunday afternoon leisure hour, but because she had found out the lesson was to be on Jonah and the whale. She had always been partial to the story of the ravens feeding Elijah and to the parable of the Prodigal Son. She felt that her temperament inclined her most to stories where hospitality and mouth-watering descriptions of hunger appeased

provided the dramatic interest. Well she knew that the Tishbite and the erring son who returned to the feast of fatted calf would have received full justice at her hands. As for Jonah, and the whale with the inordinate œsophagus, she would do her best.

After the opening exercises of the Sunday-school session, Mrs. Wopp was pained to notice that some of her scholars did not consider attention to the lesson any part of their duty. However, that strict disciplinarian had a vast store of startling reprimands that set all eyes gazing on her sincere countenance.

But minds may stray though eyes seem attentive. Two boys began to indulge surreptitiously in the mild amusement of extracting toothsome kernels from refractory shells. Cracking nuts not being conducive to alertness of mind, Mrs. Wopp promptly confiscated a large bag of filberts which proved to be the joint property of Pat Bliggins and Pete Stolway.

The infant class which was to be under the guidance of Mrs. Wopp for the day,

consisted of seven small pupils. They were seated on a low bench in one corner of the church. Green denim curtains were hung in such a way that, after the preliminary devotional exercises, the little class could be screened from the adults and older pupils. A blackboard stood on the floor, and upon a table near by were many colored crayons. The infantile mind required such aids to the imagination.

Mrs. Wopp viewed with misgiving the ornate writing not yet erased from the previous lesson. She feared her own handwriting would suffer by comparison.

"Mith Wopp," offered Lila Williams with a dignity befitting her eight years and her enviable position as daughter of the regular teacher, "my ma wont let Pete and Pat thit together, they act too thilly."

Acting on this timely suggestion, Mrs. Wopp deposited the mischievous youths on small chairs, one on each side of her table, directly under her watchful eye. Cracking nuts seemed to have been the special proposed form of amusement for the afternoon. By the end of five minutes the substitute

teacher had set several large noisy paper bags on the window ledge.

It took some time to focus her intellect on the proper placing of mirthful youngsters, but at last, after singing "Like a little candle burning in the night," all were in readiness to imbibe biblical learning.

Mrs. Wopp drew the green curtains together and turned to the smallest girl in the class.

"What's the Golden Text, Norer?"

Norah Bliggins, whose nose was already moist from the effects of domestic discord, thrust a chubby finger into her mouth and began to pucker up her eyes preparatory to emitting a howl of dismay at being singled out for the first question. Her brother Pat, sensing the situation, put up his hand eagerly and answered for her.

Mrs. Wopp repeated the words, slowly rolling them on her tongue as though to extract every ounce possible of scriptural nutriment, "So they took up Joner and carst him forth inter the sea."

Choosing a piece of bright yellow chalk she began to inscribe the golden text on the

blackboard. She pressed too hard and the chalk cracked and fell to the floor. Pete Stolway vaulted out of his chair to capture the yellow pencil, but he had the misfortune to step on both the pieces of crayon, crushing them to sand, a heap of yellow grit.

"Never min', Pete, an' thank you anyways, but sence the lesson's a hull lot about the sea, I'll jist write with blue chork."

The light shone through the colored glass window, casting a bluish tinge over the large earnest countenance of the teacher, and a distinct whisper was heard to the effect that "Mrs. Wopp's face was blue mourderin'."

Impressed with the importance of her task of instilling wisdom into the minds of her young listeners, Mrs. Wopp ignored this remark and continued the narrative into which she had already launched.

"Here was Joner scourin' down to Jopper to take the ship to Tarshidge arter the Lord hed distinctly told him to go to Ninivver, an' fer punishment the Lord hed him swallered by a whale."

The eloquent teacher looked to see some

immediate tangible effect from this bald statement of the result of Jonah's disobedience, and during her recital gazed sternly on Pat Bliggins and Pete Stolway as objects the most in need of her oratory.

"When Joner got to Jopper, bein' an honest man, he paid his fare."

A hand shot up at this point in the lesson and a thin voice piped, 'Please, Mis' Wopp, I was to the Fair last year."

Not deigning to notice this irrelevant interuption the teacher proceded.

"But the Lord hed his eye on Joner an' put an orful wind on the sea."

Several hands waved wildly and a chorus of voices eagerly broke in; through the childish babel could be heard a lisping narrative.

"Please, Mith Wopp, the latht windthorm upthet our hen-houth."

Mrs. Wopp lurched heavily in her endeavor to calm the tumult of excited voices. Quiet was at length restored after several pupils had given thrilling accounts of catastrophes caused by windstorms.

"By this time Joner was snorin' in the bot-

tom of the boat, an' the man that was bossin' the ship comes up to Joner an' woke him an' arsked him to pray."

As the story became more intelligible to childish apprehension, several bright pairs of eyes rested on the teacher. "Then," continued Mrs. Wopp, "the sailors carst lots to see who should be throwed orf the ship, an' the lot fell on Joner."

St. Elmo Mifsud, his angelic face framed in silky curls, now became the prey to the machinations of Pete Solway, who had eluded the vigilant eye of Mrs. Wopp during her dramatic recital. A roar of pain escaped the child as a sharp tweak was applied to his curls. Recalled to matters entirely mundane, the teacher administered severe reproof.

"Please did the lot hurt Joner when it fell?" queried a sober-minded seeker of truth.

The perturbed lady wisely let the question pass not being absolutely clear herself as to the operation involved in the casting of lots. She hastened to take up the thread of the story.

"Then they arsked Joner what his job was an' what he hed did to bring sich trouble on them. So Joner up an' confessed that he ran away. Orl this time the sea was a-roarin', the waves was a-dashin', an' the winds was a-howlin', an' the little vessel rocked in the trough."

St. Elmo's face brightened with intelligence. He broke into the story to give a graphic account of how a little yellow chicken of his sister's had got "dwownded" in the pig-trough.

This interlude gave Mrs. Wopp an opportunity to recover her equilibrium which had been disturbed by her vivid conception and realistic description of the storm, all of which had necessitated startling gestures and a swaying, rocking movement of the body, illustrative of a ship in distress.

"Some o' the men was sorft-hearted an' agin flingin' Joner overboard, so they rowed reel hard to git to land."

Pat Bliggin's mind was undoubtedly wandering, so a drastic question was in order.

"Now, Pat, kin you tell me which was

the best men, the ones that rowed reel hard to save Joner, or the ones that leaned back an' didn't care a strawr."

Thus interrogated, the boy who had caught but one fleeting word of the sentence, reddened, and shuffling his feet, said he'd "often rode a wild cayuse."

" 'Pears to me, Pat Bliggins, you haven't been listenin' proper to the story. These men rode a ship not a cayuse."

"Please," answered the discomfited youth, "I aint never seen a ship of no kind."

Mrs. Wopp's face assumed a forgiving air as she accepted this defence. Then began that portion of the story that leads up to the tragic culmination.

"So they took up Joner an' tossed him inter the sea."

Mrs. Wopp then proceeded to enlarge on the horrific pilgrimage of Jonah through the vasty interior caverns of the whale.

"For three days an' three nights there was no sleep fer his eyes nor slumber fer his eyelets."

A loud whisper from Pete Stolway disturbed the orator.

"Peter Stolway, may I arsk you to tell out loud what you was whisperin'?"

"I just said the whale must have been bustin'?" admitted Pete, reluctantly. Mrs. Wopp could not logically argue the point with the astute Peter, so she went on to depict vividly Jonah's further vicissitudes.

"The whale went splurgin' an' splutterin' through the waves, mebbe blowin' up a big waterspout like we see them doin' in the jography picters. Then Joner prayed like everything an' wrastled with the Lord, an' his prayer was heerd, an' the whale spit him up on the bank."

Having thus disposed of Jonah to her own evident satisfaction, and having as she considered, given much valuable instruction, Mrs. Wopp proceeded to question the children.

"Peter Stolway, what is a whale?"

"A whale is a fish bigger nor a house," answered Pete, with ready assurance.

"Mannel Rodd, did you ever ketch a fish?"

"Mannel promptly hung his head and made no reply, being much too shy to at-

tempt an answer in English, whatever his thoughts in Russian might have been.

"Well, time is near up younguns; has any one a question to arsk?"

"Mith Wopp, had Jonah any little girlth or boyth at home?"

This was a poser for Mrs. Wopp, who was obliged to admit that her knowledge of biblical genealogy did not embrace the immediate relatives of Jonah.

"Was it dark for Joner inside the whale?" asked Pete Stolway, who noted his father viewing him through the gaping curtain and wished to appear in earnest conversation with his instructor.

"I reckon Joner hadn't any too much light," opined Mrs. Wopp.

At this point Superintendent Stolway rang the bell for general assembly. As she drew the curtains, Mrs. Wopp reflected that she had nobly pumped from the well of truth, crystal waters for the mental refreshment of her scholars.

Vigorously all joined in the closing hymn and Mrs. Wopp's high soprano could be heard above all the other voices. A sense

of duty well performed added even greater power to the vocal billowing.

As Betty Wopp and Maria Mifsud, each holding a hand of St. Elmo, left the church, they were highly entertained by that small boy's account of a "man named Jonah who had swallowed a dwate big fish called a whale."

Arrived at home almost bursting with information, the child recounted to his astonished mother a long complicated story of how "theh was a lot of bad men and they weh et by a big fish, the big fish met a man on the woad called Jonah and asked him what he was doing on the woad and Jonah pwayed weel hahd and wode on the fish and a big wind blowed him off, just like Lila William's hen-house."

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE AUTOGRAPH QUILT.

On Moses Wopp devolved the responsibility of driving the ladies of the household over the two miles of prairie lying between the Wopp ranch and that of Mrs. Mifsud. Betty, too, was going. The Ladies' Aid did not meet every day, nor had it always on hand the alluring business of an autograph quilt, on which flourished in outlined boldness the name of every man, woman and child in the district and many out of it.

"Wartch yer team Moses," commanded Mrs. Wopp from the back seat of the democrat.

"I am wartchin', Mar," replied Moses, "But Josh 'pears to be worryin' 'bout somethin'. He's chewin' his bit an' breakin' inter a run-like every minute."

"An' well I know who's makin' him stew an' chomp." You needn't try to deceive yer, Mar," chided the knowing matron.

The amused laugh of Nell Gordon, who

sat beside Mrs. Wopp, floated past the youthful pair in front and perhaps helped to embue Moses with the reckless spirit of Jehu. The boy secretly admired his teacher, though he had an idea he would soundly pummel any boy with sufficient temerity to accuse him of it.

"Whoa, Josh! Whoa, Jake!" he roared, apparently exerting himself to the utmost to hold in the skittish pair, but in reality giving a few practised touches on the reins which defeated his commands.

With a start and plunge the surprised horses, now thoroughly indignant, set off at a gallop.

The trail was for the most part smooth and uneventful, but here and there the wheels of the democrat dipped into a gopher hole, causing anxiety and discomfort, especially to those in the back seat. These ladies were holding on to the side bars with utmost tenacity, yet Mrs. Wopp afterwards asserted, that when a particularly vicious depression was encountered, they were bounced violently at least three feet in the air and were considerably worried lest

they should not land on the seat again. However, they displayed great fortitude under these distressing circumstances, and by the time Moses had calmed the horses to a slower pace, they had regained self-possession.

"It's that Jake. He's sich an ornery animule," explained the boy, thus shamelessly vilifying a patient and much enduring character.

The Mifsud ranch-house was situated in a valley close to Ripple Creek. This stream was guarded in its serpentine course by a fringe of trees which extended several rods on each side. Moses drove up to the house door with a flourish and his passengers alighted. His mother paused a moment to urge, "Be sure an' git yer chores done early, Moses, an' you an' Par be here fer supper by six o'clock."

"Orl right, Mar," answered Moses, dutifully, his mouth watering in anticipation of the goodies in prospect.

Several ladies of the district were already busy "settin' up" the quilt when Mrs. Wopp and her satellites entered the Mifsud parlor.

"Oh, aint it beaut-i-ful?" admired Betty. The creation which she admired so immensely was made of pieces of silk of many colors and was reminiscent of numerous long-defunct waists, ribbons, neckties, hats and, perhaps, even a few wedding gowns which had travelled from several corners of the globe to be welded together in this glorious finale. The pieces, irregular in shape, had been sewn together and the seams beautified by feather-stitching. On the majority of the patches were names worked in red, green or yellow, whichever color contrasted most suitably with the background. Here, for the nominal sum of ten cents, names which might otherwise have fallen into oblivion were destined to live and bloom for incalculable years. The quilt now nearing completion would, when finished by its energetic creators, be sold at auction and it was expected to bring a handsome sum. The money so realized would revive the drooping finances of the Ladies' Aid.

"Oh, Miss Gordon, here's my name," announced Betty, excitedly, pointing to a central part of the quilt. "An' here's yours right clost to it."

"How nice, Betty," answered Nell, who had threaded her needle and was now prepared to join those already busily stitching away. "You and I will travel down the ages side by side."

"But s'pose you change yer name, Miss Gordon," whispered Betty slyly. "Then nobody'd know 'twas you."

"I must be very careful, then, not to change it," responded Nell, as she took the seat assigned to her.

The elders, having settled at their task, Maria Mifsud and Betty, who were considered too young and irresponsible to assist with such important work, made their way to the creek, that perennial source of amusement for the youthful. They were accompanied by Maria's small brother, St. Elmo. Here, during the long summer afternoon they gaily disported themselves, even the rather dignified Maria entering with zest into childish fun.

In the house, meanwhile, affairs were proceeding quite as happily as those out of doors. The hostess fluctuated between the parlor and kitchen. She was preparing a

repast not only for the workers present, but also for the men-folk who would presently arrive to take them to their respective homes. Excused from quilting, she nevertheless managed to spend considerable time with her guests. Mrs. Mifsud was a lady who aspired to literary attainments. She had read "Beulah," "Vashti," "Lucile," "St. Elmo" and many other books of like calibre. She felt that her talents were practically wasted, living in what she termed a desert, yet she strove, when occasion offered, by elegance of deportment and conversation to enhance her gifts. She often spoke tenderly of the late Mr. Mifsud who, in spite of the fact that his face had been adorned with bristling side-whiskers of an undeniable red, had shown in other ways some signs of intelligence and feeling. He had been carried off by the shingles. According to Mrs. Mifsud's account, her deeply-lamented spouse had considered the tall attenuated form of his wife "willowy," her long thin black hair "a crown of glory," her worn narrow countenance with its sharp nose and coal-black eyes, "seraphic."

"I wonder who'll buy this here quilt," speculated Mrs. Wopp, as she bent over her task, "there's shorely a great sight o' work on it. As fer me, I aint got time to do much fancy work an' I'd never git round to a job like this fer myself."

"Not many of us would, Mrs. Wopp," remarked Mrs. Bliggins, a small fair woman with a round placid countenance. "What with cookin', an' washin', an' cleanin', an' buttermakin', an' hundreds of other things, there's not much time for fancy work."

"Miss Gordon here, made me a harnsome lace yoke fer an underwaist, an' give it to me fer my birthday," volunteered Mrs. Wopp.

Mrs. Mifsud had entered the room in time to hear the last remark. Owing to the paucity of minds as keenly intellectual as her own, Mrs. Mifsud always tried to keep her remarks to a suitable level so that all present might comprehend her language. The heights, alas! must be scaled by her alone. While willing to acknowledge the substantial character of Mrs.

Wopp, she considered her sadly deficient in grammar and social graces. She now interposed.

"I am given to understand by the best fashion-plates, Mrs. Wopp, that the garment you term an 'underwaist' is now designated a casserole."

"Well, now, is that so? It sounds to me like a furrin word," returned Mrs. Wopp, who admired Mrs. Mifsud's polished utterances, while by no means undervaluing her own rhetorical gifts.

"Doubtless it is incorporated in the language of some foreign people," conceded Mrs. Mifsud, languidly.

"Who is going to auction the quilt when it is finished?" inquired Nell Gordon, appealing to her hostess as President of the Ladies' Aid.

"Personally, I should be agreeably disposed to requesting Mr. Wopp to officiate," answered the lady addressed.

This remark caused Mrs. Wopp to feel considerable uneasiness. She was morally certain that her Ebenezer in his shyness would make a muddle of the sale, so she hastened to offer a suggestion.

"Why not arsk Geordie Hodgekiss. He's sich a grand feller fer helpin' at dances, an' his voice 'ud most wake the dead. I feel shore he'd hev the good o' the quilt at heart."

This suggestion called for a general discussion. One or two very conservative ladies were not sure that a young man who so frequently played a prominent part at dances should also figure in church affairs. It might bring a curse on them. However, as there was no immediate need for decision, the subject was abandoned.

"Did you hev a good time in the city larst week, Mis' Mifsud?" asked Mrs. Wopp, politely.

"Thank you kindly, Mrs. Wopp, I was most enchantingly entertained. My brother and his wife conducted me to numerous functions. I heard a xylophone for the first time."

Mrs. Wopp was floored. She rapidly reflected that that which Mrs. Mifsud had heard might have been anything from the "buzzin' of a skeeter to the tootin' of an autermobyle."

"An' where did you hear it, my dear?" she queried, cautiously feeling her way.

"At my brother's Mrs. Wopp. He had just acquired it, so of course little proficiency was yet attained."

It occurred to Mrs. Wopp that the object in question might have been a new kind of singing bird, but "least said, soonest mended." She would ask Moses if Clarence had ever mentioned it, the very first chance she had. None of the other ladies present assayed to join in the conversation, so perhaps most of them also were mystified. Mrs. Wopp looked hard at Nell Gordon. Of course she knew what Mrs. Mifsud meant, but she seemed completely absorbed in turning a difficult corner in the quilt. A welcome interruption occurred.

"How is your Ada since she had the jaundice, Mrs. Stolway?" inquired Mrs. Bliggins.

"None too strong. But she's picking up since the doctor gave her a tonic," was the reply.

"It's a terrible disease, shorely," interpolated Mrs. Wopp. "Ebenezer's sister-

in-law's cousin hed it, an' fer a long time she was as yaller as a biled turnip. Her feelin's was low, too, an' she thort she was goin' to die. She made her will, leavin' her clothes an' her cat, which was all she hed, to an ole men's refuge. But lan' sakes! she's alive yet an' peart as a robin. She got a set o' false teeth an' a switch jist larst month."

Mrs. Mifsud who had listened to this recital with polite interest, now excused herself on the plea of urgent duties in the kitchen.

"I see two rigs comin'," announced Mrs. Wopp, suddenly. From where she sat she could view through the window a considerable portion of the trail. "The men'll soon orl be here, so s'posin' we roll up the quilt. Ef everybody's back's achin' like mine they'll be glad to quit."

Betty and Maria, whose reviving interest in the quilt had drawn them from their play to the somewhat crowded parlor, now reported several vehicles to be in sight. They hastened with this information to Mrs. Mifsud in the kitchen, that important

domain whence a savory odor had been issuing for some time.

"Clarence will tell the men where to instal their teams," the hostess reflected. The boy, who had fought shy of this mere woman's party, had spent the afternoon in the barn.

"Maria, where is St. Elmo?" asked Mrs. Mifsud, as with flushed face she basted some fowls in the oven.

"We left him by the creek, Ma, playing in the sand," was the reply. "When Betty and me tried to make him come in he slapped us." "Go and bring him now, so you can renovate his appearance before supper," directed the mother.

Maria, accompanied by Betty, repaired to the spot where they had left the little boy. He was not there. In vain they shouted and called his name.

"He must have gone to Clarence in the barn," concluded Maria, setting off at a run.

Clarence, however, when questioned, declared, "I haven't seen the little shaver since dinner."

Maria now began to get alarmed, and her anxiety being communicated to Clarence and Betty, the three young people set off in a combined search.

Still no St. Elmo. They proceeded a considerable distance down the creek.

"Look he's been here," said Betty, pointing to a small footprint in the moist soil, "An' he's headed down the crick."

"We'll have to go and tell Ma," said Maria.

As they neared the house with their disquieting news, Mr. Wopp and Moses were just alighting from the democrat, while Mrs. Mifsud at the open door stood calling out cheery greetings.

"St. Elmo's lost, Ma," wailed Maria. "We can't find him and he's wandered down the creek."

Mrs. Mifsud threw up her hands in dismay.

"My poor lamb, my little darling," she said, speaking with difficulty, "There are so many lynxes in the woods, and he's so afraid of them. If he meets one he'll die of fright."

"Moses, put the hosses in the stable an' foller me. We'll soon find him, Mis' Mifsud," said Mr. Wopp, his kindliness asserting itself in this crisis. "Come on, Clarence, an' Mis' Mifsud you send the other men along 's soon 's they git here. Jist you rest easy, we'll soon be back with yer boy."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MOSES GAINS PRESTIGE.

Moses Wopp, not quite reconciled to this unexpected order of things, as it seemed to involve a protracted fast for his already clamoring stomach, nevertheless made haste to obey his father's instructions. Josh and Jake were quickly unhitched and led into the stable. They were accommodated with a mangerful of hay, which they immediately fell to munching. Moses then ran after Mr. Wopp and Clarence, who were already busily searching the wooded banks of the creek, thoroughly scrutinizing the underbrush, which in some places was exceedingly dense and tangled. Within the next half-hour they were joined by four other men, despatched by Mrs. Mifsud, and the whole party proceeded slowly and carefully down the creek, some one of the number occasionally shouting the name of the lost boy.

While this search was being carried on,

those left in the house were in no cheerful mood. They all repaired to the kitchen, as the windows there afforded a view of the path leading to the creek. Each lady in her own way tried to bring comfort and consolation to the worried mother. Mrs. Bliggins gave a long graphic account of the loss of her cousin, Mrs. Snoop's husband, at sea. Mr. Augustus Snoop, it transpired, had sailed away one summer morning on the good ship "Wanderer," with Australia as his goal. The story was somewhat elliptical, but the hearers could gather that before Mr. Snoop's departure there had been a huge caldron of trouble brewing on the domestic hearth. Unfortunately, the ship in which Mr. Snoop sailed had after many weeks been reported missing, and Mrs. Snoop had donned sombre garments in honor of the departed. She had found some slight consolation in telling her friends of her late husband's many excellent qualities and of his unrivalled devotion to her. She would wipe away the gushing tears with her black-bordered handkerchief as she recounted how her dear

Augustus had been so careful and considerate of her and had even been known to turn the clothes-wringer for her. True, she had taken in washing for some years to keep the family larder filled, but her dear husband had felt so much concerned about it that during that whole time he had not been equal to doing any work himself. The sorrowing widow had felt certain that from his home of heavenly bliss the loving Augustus, whenever he could be spared from his other duties, was daily and hourly watching his adored wife now living frugally but peacefully on his life insurance money.

Then one day, after several years, a stranger had come to town with a startling story. He said that he had been a sailor on the "Wanderer," when she had made her last voyage. The ship had been blown in a gale upon the rocky coast of a small island in the south seas. He with several others of the crew and a few passengers had managed to get to land and had been hospitably treated by the natives. A small trading-vessel which regularly visited the island had taken them off in the course of the next

few weeks, but one of their number, a passenger named Snoop, had refused to leave. He had asserted he might as well be there as anywhere else. Later reports brought from the island by the crew of the trading-vessel had been to the effect that Mr. Snoop was leading a tranquil and peaceful existence. He was espoused to several dusky maidens and was so much revered and respected as the only possessor of a white skin on the island, that he was never expected to stir hand or foot in any way suggesting work.

Mrs. Snoop had been furious at this calumniation of her lamented husband. But, after learning that the sailor had depicted Mr. Snoop very accurately as to appearance and disposition, she had begun to doubt. "When she heard how Mr. Snoop let those heathen girls run after him an' wait on him, Mrs. Mifsud," recounted Mrs. Bliggins, "even lightin' his pipe for him an' puttin' his hat on his head, she began to see things clear, an' mark my words, she quit mournin'. She couldn't do anything to Augustus, of course, but she sold her crape clothes and

got some new bright ones, mostly red an' yellow, just to show people how she felt. She made kindlin' of the crayon picture of Augustus she had bought from a travellin' agent. She said it was a cryin' shame that Augustus Snoop, who had been brought up on two catechisms, the Mother's an' Shorter, afterwards joinin' the Holy Rollers, should have taken up with those south sea trollops."

Mrs. Bliggins' narrative came to an end. Though its application to the misfortune which dominated the minds of the little gathering in Mrs. Mifsud's kitchen was somewhat obscure, it served to cause a momentary interest. Experiences so unusual and so complicated as those of Mr. Augustus Snoop were bound to be diverting.

Mrs. Mifsud, however, had seemingly heard not a word of the story. In her distress she forgot that Mrs. Wopp was decidedly plebeian in her conversation and otherwise hopelessly unfashionable; all these discrepancies vanished from her mind, and leaning over on the ample bosom, she wept copiously. Mrs. Wopp patted her in a

motherly way. "One touch o' nater makes the hull world a-kin," she whispered, "Hearten up, Mis' Mifsud, Moses 'll find yer little lamb. That boy seems slow, but all's not gold that's a-glitterin'. He's shorely got a nose fer findin' things. Our black carf got lost on the prairie one day an' he found it arter everybody else hed giv' up huntin'."

Her anxiety somewhat allayed for the moment, Mrs. Mifsud roused herself for the entertainment of her guests.

"I'm so sorry our afternoon has been spoiled," she apologized. "While we wait we might as well have a cup of tea. Maria, rinse the silver teapot with boiling water."

The kettle which had been boiling itself hoarse for the last hour, was now called into requisition.

A mile or two down the creek the searching party sought diligently for the little lost boy. Moses was in the lead. He had announced his adamant resolve to find St. Elmo, or perform the irrevocable feat of "bustin'." He cherished an idea of his own as to the child's whereabouts. A few

weeks previously, on an all-day excursion, Moses had played pirates with St. Elmo and they had utilized a most delectable earthy cave for their game.

"S'posin' the pore little critter's hidin' there, shiverin' an' chatterin', afeerd o' them orful pirates," he soliloquised, while large drops of moisture gathered on his brow at the thought. As he hurried along he encountered a branch which hung low and like a scalpel lifted the straw hat from the head of the astonished boy.

Moses' intuition regarding St. Elmo's retreat proved to be correct, and it was a sadly dejected countenance on which he gazed when he looked into the cave. Tears, dirt, and the juice of Saskatoon berries mingled on the fair sleeping face of the child, until he seemed to be the very Cree Indian he had so often personated in his play. His long curls were tangled and matted with small twigs. His diminutive brown velvet coat displayed a large rent in the elbow through which oozed a pathetic-looking suppuration of pink and white checked shirt.

"Fer the love o' Mike, kid, how did you git here?" said Moses, rousing the small sleeper. "Gosh, but yer face needs warshin'."

Innocuous as this remark might seem, it caused St. Elmo's lip to quiver and two large tears started on their grimy course down his cheeks.

"I was looking foh Jonah and the whale he met on the woad, and I got losted, I did." St. Elmo ended his fantastic explanation with an extensive gulp. Moses took a small grubby hand in his and led the afflicted boy in triumph to the other searchers.

When the party reached the house and St. Elmo had been received with every manifestation of joy, Mr. Wopp in one burst of eloquence explained how his boy Moses had found him. Moses, the hero of the hour, stood abashed before the encomiums of Mrs. Mifsud. He twirled his hat at a fearful rate on his doubled fist, standing awkwardly on one foot the while.

It was a proud and happy family that returned to the Wopp homestead late that evening. The air being chilly, a fire was

lighted in the dining-room and around this inspiring centre there was much discussion of the days doings. The unparalleled sagacity of Moses was the jubilant theme running in the minds of his parents and sister. Moses bore his honors modestly.

"Ef it hadn't been fer Mosey, St. Elmo might of been lorst yet," remarked Betty, gazing reflectively into the fire. "Ef he was goin' walkin' on till he found Joner, he'd of been gone a long while."

"An' was the pore little feller lookin' fer Joner?" said Mrs. Wopp. She spoke pityingly, yet she could not avoid some slight feeling of satisfaction over this evident tribute to her powers of biblical narrative.

"'Magine huntin' Joner in Mifsud's woods." Betty dimpled at the thought. "He was more like to find a coyote or stir up a bee's nest. My! St. Elmo must of et a sight o' berries to git so smeared."

"Tell us how you found him, Moses," requested Nell Gordon, who was always interested in tales of knighthood.

But Moses refused to dilate on the subject. He realized that some of the cream

might be removed from his achievement were he to explain the matter of the cave. He so seldom had the felicity of being placed on a pedestal, and his present status must be maintained if possible. So he murmured something to the effect that the others were so slow he thought he'd "jist go ahead o' them an' try to find the blame kid a little farster."

"When Moses is growed up, Mar, I think it 'ud be jist lovely fer him to be in the Mounted P'iice. He's so clever at findin' things an' he'd look jist grand in the clothes," enthused Betty.

"The p'licemen do hev a fine look," agreed Mrs. Wopp. "Fine feathers causes fine birds. Sometimes when the feathers is taken orff there aint nothin' much left. That Plymouth Rock hen I plucked yesterday looked good walkin' round the yard, but, Lan' Sakes! when I'd plucked her she was nothin' but skin an' bones." The good lady had no desire to underrate that useful body of men, the guardians of the law, but she considered it wise to exercise a constantly restraining influence on the vanities of youth.

Betty, who had understanding, was not turned from the subject of her thoughts.

"Larst Tuesday," she continued, "two p'licemen went ridin' along the trail jist as we were comin' home from school, an' they had the beautifulest horses. Moses can ride any horse, no matter how ornery." Betty's eyes shone with pride.

"He mustn't git thinkin' too much of hisself 'cause o' what he did this day," warned the boy's mother. "Pride goes afore distruckshing, an' a horty spirit afore a fall."

"Leave the boy be, Lize," directed Ebenezer Wopp, whom the pride-inspiring events of the evening had rendered more self-assertive than usual. "He aint crowin' none, an' what he done brung credit to the hull o' us."

"Every tub must stan' on its own bottom," commented Mrs. Wopp. But even as she spoke, an unmistakable expression of gratified pride spread over her large motherly countenance.

Betty watching her, thought she had never seen "Mar" look so handsome and she thoroughly appreciated the cause.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### BETTY AMONG THE FLOWERS

"Jist as soon's you finish yer dinner an' yer noon chores, Moses, I want you to go weed them beets," instructed Mrs. Wopp. "The weeds is chokin' them out an' I see the gophers has been eatin' some o' them, too."

"When I do my dishes, Mar, can I work in the garding, too?" inquired Betty.

"To be shore you kin," was the reply, "but don't hurry too much an' smarsh the crockery."

Although the temptation to reckless haste was great, Betty resisted it. It was not long, however, before a pile of shining blue willow-ware was restored to its accustomed place on the oil-cloth-covered pantry shelves, and Betty, seizing her sunbonnet, hurried out of doors.

The sun shone brightly and the atmosphere had that brilliant clarity, peculiar to the prairie. Several chattering magpies

strutted on the grassplot between the house and the barn. Betty ran around to the further side of the house where lay the garden. Here Moses and his mother were already hard at work.

The whole garden had been fenced in as a precaution against the encroachment of predatory animals. Molly, the inquisitive black cow, or Josh and Jake, who had no proper sense of the fitness of things, would have liked nothing better than to sample Mrs. Wopp's prize turnips and scanty crop of Indian corn, and to trample into the soft earth whatever did not suit their dainty palates.

One corner of the garden was devoted to flowers, and in this spot the soul of Betty delighted. True, there had been many insidious foes to conquer before a satisfactory result had been obtained. The seedlings which had first appeared in the spring had been destroyed by a cruel frost. Other seeds were sown with many hopes. These grew feebly and were carefully tended by the child. Then the heavy rains came, lasting several weeks, and it seemed as

though the tender plants would be bodily washed away. Betty, clad in Moses' slicker, visited them one stormy day, and as she realized their danger, her tears mingled with the rain-drops on her cheeks. But the Storm-King was only acting his worst, because his reign was nearly over. Next morning, when Betty rose, the clouds had rolled away and the golden sun himself was peering at her through the curtains. Since that time of anxiety the plants had grown and thrived and excepting for an occasional day of strong winds and the nibblings of a few gophers, had had no setbacks.

Around the outside of the garden was a border of fragrant mignonette. Inside of this was another of white candytuft. This double wall encircled a splendid array of flowers. There were dwarf nasturtiums, red and yellow, a tangled mass of sweet peas clambering up a yard or two of chicken-wire, bright marigolds and asters of various colors. Velvet pansies added their soft charms to the display. But most brilliant of all stood a few hollyhocks. Many of their kin had perished in a struggle against the fierce winds.

Outside of the flower garden proper and between it and the vegetables, were several rows of gay sunflowers. Mr. Wopp approved of these mightily, because the seeds were "sich grand feed for the chickings." Betty looked on these gaudy sentinels with sorrowing pity, because they had not the daintiness of the other flowers.

Diligently as Betty had tended this little garden, it was considered to be a family possession, the child's own particular treasures lying beyond its fragrant border. Her cherished morning-glories and climbing nasturtiums found a welcome support in the old wooden fence.

When Betty entered the open garden gate she noticed Nancy sitting patiently beside a gopher hole watching for the tiny inmate to appear. In order not to disturb her pet, the child took a roundabout course to the beet patch where Moses and Mrs. Wopp were working.

"Afore I begin weedin'," she announced, "I b'lieve I'll make two bouquets, one orl yaller an' one orl white, an' some sparrer-grass in both."

"They'd look purtier, Glory, ef you'd put more colors in," commented Mrs. Wopp.

Thoroughly enjoying her task, Betty flitted from flower to flower until she had gathered an armful of the lovely blossoms. Then visiting the vegetable beds she appropriated a few feathery sprays of asparagus. Returning to the house, she made up her bouquets. One, a great mass of yellow, lightly flecked with green, she set on a small table which stood in the darkest corner of the dining-room, then stood back to view the effect.

"It looks jist as ef the sun had crept into that corner at larst," she decided.

After setting her white bouquet on the large dining-table, Betty again hastened to her beloved garden and began weeding where her ministrations were needed. As she worked, she hummed "Sweet and Low" softly to herself. The school children had lately learned to sing it.

"I carn't think what's happened to my carrots this year," said Mrs. Wopp, vexedly, after a time. "Hardly any hev come up, an' them as did come, aint growed much.

We'll shorely not hev many carrot puddin's nor pies this winter, nor mulligans neither."

The concluding part of this speech was of vital interest to Moses, who delighted in all the delicacies mentioned.

"Mebbe them new seed catalogue folks cheated us, Mar," he suggested.

"Mebbe you're right, Moses; mebbe the seed was no good," sighed Mrs. Wopp. "Anyhow, it's too late now to put in any more. We carnt know ef the heart o' a seed is good no more nor we kin know the heart o' our next-door neighbor. The seed may 'pear to be good enough from the outside, yet arter all be mighty lackin'."

A period of silence followed excepting for the slight sounds made by the workers, the drowsy humming of flies, the murmur of an occasional bee and the faint rustlings of the tall stalks of corn.

"I guess Nancy's got tired wartchin' fer the gopher to come out," remarked Betty, presently. "She's left her job an' gone away. P'raps she thinks she can git a mouse in the barn easier."

"Moses, I hear yer Par comin' with the

hay," announced Mrs. Wopp, suddenly. "You'll hev to go help him with it."

Not unwillingly the boy relinquished his task. Weeding after all is thankless work. The weeds will persist in growing in spite of every discouragement.

When Moses reached the barn he found Mr. Wopp just drawing up his team of heavy-work horses beside a small corral where the hay was to be deposited. On the load beside Mr. Wopp, Moses' wondering eyes beheld Jethro—Jethro whose greatest joy was to run beside any vehicle and range the country as far as he could on both sides of the trail.

"What's Jeth perched up there fer, Par?" demanded the boy.

Before answering, Mr. Wopp solemnly handed Moses first the reins then the dog, after which he slowly and carefully descended himself.

"Two coyotes most hed him," he explained. "Jist near the big slough, the spunky little critter started chasin' them. Then they turned on him an' he done some fine sprintin'. I tried to turn the team to

go an' meet him, but the hosses acted up, an' as soon as I got them quieter the dog was atween them an' the coyotes slinkin' away. It were a close shave fer him."

Moses eyed his pet with solicitude.

"Pore little beggar, he's clean tuckered out," he said. "He'll need a good supper."

According to Moses' idea, an excellent meal was the panacea for all earthly troubles.

The Wopps, father and son, attacked the load of hay with such vigor that it was quickly disposed of. Just as the last forkful was being pitched over the corral fence, the boy looking up saw a vehicle approaching.

"Here's Mis' Mifsud an' St. Elmo comin' in the buckboard," he announced.

"You'd best go an' take her hoss, Moses," directed Mr. Wopp. Then raising his voice he called, "Go right on into the house, Mis' Mifsud. Lize has jist gone in from the garden."

St. Elmo hung back, electing to stay with the hero who had rescued him from the dangers of the wood.

When Moses, accompanied by his small attendant, returned to his unfinished task in the garden, he found Betty still at work. She was weeding the pansy bed. St. Elmo clapped his chubby hands in delight.

"Oh, Betty," he begged, "Pease dive me some."

Betty picked him a small bouquet. She knew that in the child's hot grasp the flowers would soon droop and she loved them so dearly that she grieved to see them wither and die. St. Elmo, however, was not satisfied.

"Won't you dive Elmo some wed ones, too?" he pleaded.

"The fairies might git cross," countered Betty.

"Is theh faywies wound heah, Betty? Can they see us?" inquired the little boy in awe-struck tones.

"Lots o' them, St. Elmo. I seen some the other evenin' in the moonlight. Some was dressed in green an' silver, some in white an' silver. They danced in an' out among the sunflowers."

"Can't I see the faywies some time, Betty?" asked St. Elmo.

"Only little girls see fairies ever," was the reply.

"What else did they do 'sides dancing, Betty?" questioned St. Elmo.

Betty reflected a moment. "When they got tired dancing they 'journed to the pansy bed. The queen set down on a big purple pansy that was jist like a lovely throne. The other fairies came an' bowed low in front o' her, then they gathered up their long silver trains an' walked backwards. Then the queen rose up an' walked all round among the flowers an' the other fairies follered her. They waved their wands over all the flower beds, an' that's why they've all growed so lovely."

St. Elmo looked at the specimens in his hand. "These pansies is most deaded. I fink I'll fwow them away," he declared.

"No, no, dear. Keep them, an' I'll put them in warter when we go to the house," begged Betty. "The fairies are orful cross when they see dead flowers lyin' round. Mebbe they might be too angry to come in the garding again ever."

This threatened catastrophe had consid-

erable weight with St. Elmo who, in spite of Betty's discouraging words, still had a lurking hope that he too might be privileged to see the "faywies" some day. Although he was badly handicapped in being a boy, yet in some miraculous manner there might be an exception made in his favor.

"I b'lieve I'll go an' git the warterin' can," announced Betty. "These pansies is orful dry, an' even ef the sun is shinin' on them, some warter round the roots wont hurt. You stay here, St. Elmo, an' I'll be back in a minute."

St. Elmo willingly consented. His mind was still running on the wonderful story Betty had told him. Perhaps the fairies would show themselves now Betty had gone. A few moments before, Moses had thrown down his hoe and departed to the barn, so the little boy was quite alone. He stood eagerly watching the sunflower patch where the fairies had appeared on at least one occasion.

While Betty had been busy in the garden her pet turkey, Job, who depended on his little mistress to feed him, became very

hungry. Job suffered under great disadvantages. His general one-sided condition, caused by his partial blindness, rendered him incapable of picking up the various dainties on which his brethren fattened. It must be confessed that the fondest and most partial vision could not overlook Job's undoubted scrawniness. Indeed, had he not received individual attention from the deeply sympathetic Betty, there is every reason to believe that his career would have been shortened by that inexorable law which, in those forms of life termed the lower, decrees the extinction of the weak.

Betty had a conviction, though an unspoken one, that Moses was the primary cause of Job's infirmity. The slowest of a large family of striped fluffy turkeys to emerge from the shell, he had been assisted in his efforts by the impatient Moses. Betty felt sure that the clumsy fingers of the boy had ruined the little turkey's eye. The accusation, however, was too dreadful to be put into words.

While Betty, mounted on a bench in the shed, was getting down her watering-can,

Job, who during the afternoon had searched diligently but vainly for her, rounded the corner of the garden fence. He noted the open gate and sped towards it. As he entered the garden his eye fell on St. Elmo who stood absorbed and expectant. The turkey, his odd corner-wise gait accentuated by his anxiety of mind, rushed towards the child who at first did not notice his approach. But presently, turning around, St. Elmo beheld an apparently formidable assailant which by the most powerful flight of imagination could not be mistaken for a fairy. All escape by way of the gate was shut off by the intruder. St. Elmo's plump legs, bare above his low socks, twinkled as he ran wildly towards the foot of the garden.

"Mudgie, Mudgie," he shrieked.

Job, his ardor undampened by the strangeness of this reception, made haste to follow.

"Mudgie, Mudgie, come to Elmo."

The frenzied cries of the child were distinctly audible in the kitchen where sat Mrs. Mifsud and Mrs. Wopp, the latter busily

engaged in mending a pile of socks. Both ladies sprang to their feet and hurried through the open door towards the garden, Mrs. Wopp still wearing a half-darned sock on her left hand and scattering others as she ran. They were followed by Betty, who had been filling her watering-can from the rain-barrel and had also heard the cries of the frightened child.

Mrs. Mifsud, in the lead of the rescuing party, ran through the garden gate in time to see St. Elmo fall headlong, his feet having become entangled in the long rank grass near the fence.

"What's the trouble, dear? What were you afraid of?" she enquired, as she raised him to his feet.

Before answering, the child glanced fearfully around to see if his uncanny foe had gone, and he was relieved to find that Job was hastening to meet his ever-constant friend Betty who had just entered the garden. Betty's progress had been greatly retarded by the weight of the brimimng watering-can, which she had not stopped to set down though the contents had splashed freely over her dress and shoes.

St. Elmo cast about in his mind for some plausible explanation of his recent panic. It would never do to inform the world that he had been afraid of a mere turkey.

"Elmo saw some gween and white fay-wies," he fabricated, "and wanted Mudgie to see them too."

"Mudgie never saw any fairies," replied Mrs. Mifsud, "But she is glad St. Elmo can see them."

Mrs. Wopp, after ascertaining that the little boy had received no bodily injury, stood mopping her heated face with the half-mended sock. She ceased operations to survey Betty more carefully.

"Betty Wopp," she exclaimed, "you couldn't be no wetter ef you'd fell in the big slough. Come on to the house an' change yer clothes. St. Elmo 'll need warshin', too, I reckon."

As the party, now restored to composure, left the garden, Mrs. Mifsud remarked with her usual aptness, "I occasionally experience premonitions, Mrs. Wopp, that St. Elmo will some day attain celebrity as a clairvoyant."

## CHAPTER XV.

### MERRY-MAKING IN THE HAY-LOFT.

"Mosey!"

"Wotcher want, Nosey?"

"Wisht I had two bits."

"Wot fer? You girls is allus thinkin' o' money." Moses clinked the nickels in his pocket with the air of a Vanderfeller. Betty's voice became wheedling.

"Mosey, ef I darn yer socks fer a month would you let me hev' two bits?"

"Well, I'll be blowed, gosh! Mar'd larf to hear you tarlk. You'll darn my socks, two bits or no two bits, ef Mar says."

"Now, Mosey, Mar'd be as mad as a wet hen ef she heard you. I want two bits to give to the heathens in Arfrica an' Mar don't pay me fer doin' chores like she pays you. Wisht I was a boy."

"Well, I'll see," replied Moses, but as he plunged his hand again into his pocket the cheerful jingle of coins stirred his masculine sense of ownership to profounder

depths and he frowned and turned on his heel.

For a moment Betty stood in an attitude of dejection, but suddenly her face brightened. The muscles at the corners of her mouth stiffened, her little pointed chin was thrust forward ever so slightly and a look came into her brown eyes which said plainly, "Never you mind, Moses Wopp, I'll get money and more than two bits for my missionary box."

The expression on the childish countenance became even more complex and a close observer could have seen that all was not going to be well with Moses Wopp for the next few days, and that "he'd be sorry."

As far as general knowledge went, Betty was a complete encyclopedia ahead of Moses. That youth's brains had too many labyrinthine passages through which knowledge meandered and got lost to ever lay claim to erudition. As for creative ability, Betty imbibed ideas at every pore. She took odd moments of her busy days and patching them together made hours of creative joy, a sort of mental Joseph's coat of rainbow brightness.

Her disappointment over Moses' parsimony led her now to see the urgent necessity of ideas, vital ideas, in fact, ideas that could cause silver to flow to her empty coffers, or in other words her missionary box.

She had made the box herself of small pieces of wood, the lid was nailed on and was provided with a wide inviting-looking slit so that coins of large denomination could be deposited therein.

Betty had lent Moses fifteen cents of her Christmas money and was receiving two pink and white candy canes as her weekly dividend—"truly a lean annuitant."

The child had been content to extract but fleeting moments of sweetness from the confection and as the weeks passed had in the time-honored custom kept the canes shining. Thus accumulated quite a bagful of the tempting sweets. These she sold to a haughty plutocrat at school for a dime. This coin of the realm made a pleasing clatter in her wooden box; but she reflected, not without some degree of logic, that ten cents would not go very far in carrying salvation to the suffering heathen in Africa.

But ideas came flooding into Betty's active mind. The desire to fill her box, augmented by an even greater desire to let Moses see she didn't need his shekels, sent electrical energy to her brain.

Once she had seen a moving picture show. It was a marvellous experience to her and had filled her dreams for many nights. She now decided to have a little moving picture show of her own.

Her birthday would fall on the last Saturday in September and she was sure to be allowed a party. Each guest could be secretly advised to bring as many carrots as could be conveniently carried to gain entrance to "The greatest movin' picter gallery in the world, where fairies an' birds an' flowers would act an' tarlk." The carrots so obtained could be auctioned off to the adults present, and Betty felt sure that her mother, seeing her carrots were not a success, would give a high price for the succulent vegetables. A discreet hint must also be thrown out that anyone not so fortunate as to be the possessor of a spare carrot could bring silver.

How the missionary box would jingle! How the heathen would sing for joy! While on the Wopp table carrot pudding could become a diurnal felicity!

What delightfully busy and secret evenings Betty spent in the kitchen with Mrs. Wopp helping and expostulating! What dismal sighs from Moses who, like the Marchioness, cooled his eye at the keyhole! His sighs penetrated through the said keyhole and almost softened the obdurate Betty; but, alas, his eavesdropping ended only in whetting the edge of his curiosity! What yelps from Jethro when Moses trod on his foot in headlong flight from the door as his mother approached! What copious notes written by Ebenezer W pp on the whispering and conspiracies in the kitchen! And then again what sweeping up and burning of cardboard, what hunting through old newspapers and magazines, and what clicking of scissors while a small pair of jaws worked simultaneously! What gorgeous hues from the paint-box as Betty mixed her colors and painted innumerable pictures cut from the magazines! Animals,

birds, flowers! Gay as color could make them! A veritable garden and zoo turned loose in the kitchen!

Moses regretted a hundred times his refusal to grant Betty's request for two bits. He had since offered it and had tried to thrust it on her, but injured pride could not thus be appeased.

At last the long-looked-for day arrived and by two o'clock eight children from the nearest ranches had ridden or had been brought by grown-ups to the Wopp farm, all arrayed in their best bibs and tuckers.

For two days the aromas from the kitchen had been such as to dispel the gloom from Moses' countenance, and hope and anticipation blended on his youthful visage.

The loft in the barn had been swept and garnished by Mr. Wopp for Betty's moving picture show, and thither, after the preliminary how-d'you-do's were over, she led her eager audience. Her head was held at the exact angle for ascending the ladder to perform the imposing duties of moving picture operator, and her foot was on the first rung when she suddenly thought of the collection

box for the carrots the children were carrying.

"Moses," she directed, "git an empty apple-box fer the burnt orfferin's."

Moses, who was still in the dark as to the exact character of the entertainment planned, was all eagerness to get preliminaries over.

"Here, slow-pokes, drop yer carrots in this here bin." He indicated an empty oat-bin.

Pat Bliggins approached the receptacle and deposited a prodigiously overgrown, forked, dusty carrot, miraculously endowed with powers of emotion, for several wrinkles beneath its green feathery top betrayed extreme agitation.

Norah Bliggins carried in a little basket several carrots of various sizes and complexions, all carefully scrubbed as became respectable members of the vegetable family, and shining as sweet and clean as the face of the child. These must have put to shame their forked brother, for that perturbed carrot rolled heavily to a corner and hid his grimy visage.

Norah clutched a fat smiling doll in one arm. As the result of a puncture from a nail in the fence the doll was bleeding sawdust badly at the knee. However a surgical operation with needle and thread would restore health, and Norah stanched the wound with her pinafore and prepared to enjoy life to the full. The doll continued to smile gaily as though Spartan saw-dust ran in her veins.

Peter Stolway carried a large paper bag, and as the carrots fell with resounding thuds into the bin, they seemed like inebriated question marks, so ungainly and irregular were their shapes. One giddy carrot teetered on the edge as though about to entertain the onlookers by an acrobatic performance.

"Git in there, an' no nonsense," ordered Moses, who was chafing at the delay.

Mannel Rodd's round face was very solemn as in two chubby fists he held out a small box containing a number of short knobby specimens.

With the gracious air of a duchess, Maria Mifsud dropped into the oat-bin about a

peck of the vegetables. They were coiffured and manicured correctly and doubtless considered themselves the elite of the carota species.

"Betcher took orl mornin' to tittyvate them there carrots," offered Moses, edging up to Maria with conciliatory glances, and jostling St. Elmo who stood waiting to contribute his donation. The little fellow, whose nose was still "bluggy" from tripping over the saw-horse, dropped his lonely long scraggy carrot on the floor, and in stooping to pick it up struck his head against the handle of a hay-fork and emitted a howl that might have been heard by the heathen themselves in Africa. Betty comforted him with a gum-drop that had lain neglected in her pocket for several weeks, and the cries ceased.

Lila Williams, with her dark curls falling over a pale blue gingham dress, stood watching the proceedings with impatience. She was yearning to burst into speech. As soon as St. Elmo's cries were reduced to intermittent gum-droppy sobs she turned to Betty, and looking up trustfully into her brown eyes, she launched forth.

"I wathed theeth carroth mythelf, aint they lovely and red jutht like Motheth hair." She was quite oblivious of the scornful glance bestowed on her by that outraged shock-headed youth.

Lastly came Moses' turn to pay the admission fee, and with a shame-faced expression he dropped several silver coins into the box held in Betty's hand. Her face was a study in feminine triumph as Moses mumbled, "I aint got no carrots, so here's my pay to git in ter yer little ole show."

On reaching the hay-loft all were seated with the least possible degree of discomfort on upturned soap-boxes and apple-boxes. Betty covered both windows with blankets and lit a lantern. She had constructed a pasteboard box with a large square opening and now set the lantern in such a way that a picture placed at the opening in the box was illuminated so that all could see it clearly. Betty showed her pictures in a well arranged order and her lively imagination supplied the connecting links in the story her lantern "slides" unfolded.

The child was gifted in this most ele-

mental of the arts, and her histrionic ability carried along the interest of her listeners even when the printed matter on the back of the paper interfered with the clearness of the picture. Her imagination bolstered up the defects of dry facts.

The story had fairly begun when Mrs. Wopp, Nell Gordon and Mrs. Bliggins could be heard coming up the ladder.

"Them carrots do smell sweet."

It was Mrs Wopp's voice. From her remarks one would gather that the rarest perfumes wafted on the winds invoked by Solomon could never seem so sweet to Woppian nostrils as the mingled odor of hay and freshly dug carrots.

The ladder fairly creaked under the portly lady, and Miss Gordon felt relieved when the loft was reached in safety. Mrs. Bliggins made no remark, but smiled placidly. The three stood at the landing and listened to the childish entertainer.

Betty was thoroughly engrossed in her subject. Her story was entirely of birds and flowers and fairies. True, the pictures did not realize in their movements the

lightning-like rapidity of "really truly" moving pictures, but they moved as fast as the young eyes that followed them could wish.

"This," said Betty, showing the picture of a robin, "is a wormivorious bird." Henry, the rooster, from his vantage point on a beam crowed lustily, but Betty ignored his remark.

"He will dig up a worm from the ground, an' while the worm stands on one foot with droopin' head the robin'll pick it up an' carry it orff to feed the baby robins."

Here she produced a picture of a nest of young robins, their beaks wide open for a tempting morsel hanging from the bill of father robin.

"The robin is jist the carinest bird," she added.

"Not arf as smart as a magpie," dissented Moses, "I've saw magpies that c'd think up the scheminest things." Moses was beginning to suffer from a surfeit of information and wanted to make a break in the proceedings.

"Better quit tarlkin', Moses, an' let the

picter show go on so's we kin hev supper, everythin's laid an' ready."

Mrs. Wopp's suggestion had an immediate and salutary effect on the boy.

"This peacock," went on Betty, showing the picture of a bird with plumed tail outspread, "is the white peacock of the moon. It lives in the moon, but when fairies want to come to play with li'l girls, they harness the peacock an' drive down to earth in a silver chariot."

The pictures that followed were of fairies and sprites irresistible to childish minds.

Through the Stygian darkness of the loft loomed the figure of Mrs. Wopp, a white apron of huge dimensions indicating her presence. She made as though to descend the ladder.

"Did you see the fine bin of carrots, Mar?" inquired Betty.

"Yes, I seen them an' smelt them, too; they shore 'd delight the heart of an Eskermo, Betty."

"How much will you pay fer them fer my missionary box?" bargained the child.

"Will four shinin' new quarters do?"

"O, Mar, won't the heathens' faces shine, too!" exclaimed Betty, joyously, as the coins slipped into her box with an opulent clatter.

"Here are more beads of wampum, Betty, as I have no garden." Nell Gordon's silver donation added appreciably to the weight of the collection box.

The ladies, having descended the ladder, Betty began hurriedly to show the remaining pictures. Visions of a sumptuous repast had flitted before the minds of her listeners and a spirit of restlessness pervaded the loft.

It may be that atmospheric changes helped to cause the disquiet, for in the midst of an exciting account of a fairy dancing on a moonbeam, a sudden shower descended on the barn and began to pour in a stream through a hole in the roof, immediately over Moses' head.

"I'd give my collar butting fer a seat on Noer's ark right now," said Moses, loudly, interrupting the speaker. Then the roof began to leak in another spot and a stream of water poured down on Betty's moving picture apparatus, so that the show had to be discontinued.

"I'm tho thorry, I wanted to hear more about the fairieth." Lila Williams would have braved the elements to listen to more of Betty's original stories.

"There aint no such things as fairies anyways." Peter Stolway always was a doubting Thomas, so Betty tossed her head in scorn as she replied, "There is so, cos I've saw them with my very own eyes."

St. Elmo clapped his tiny hands and asked for "Moah," while Norah Bliggins, who had been almost petrified when she heard the voice of Mrs. Wopp, sat hoping no one would ask her for the golden text. She was devoutly thankful that she could get up from her cramped position. A wide lath in the upturned box which served as her seat had broken and she had sunk deeper and deeper until her chubby chin and knees were in close proximity. It required the united efforts of Maria and Betty to extricate the unfortunate child. The doll was safe, however, and with fortitude worthy of emulation still smiled although sawdust again trickled from her re-opened wound.

Henry started up a lusty crowing and

Moses began to whistle while Betty uncovered the windows and made other preparations for leaving the loft. Several of her pictures had been spoiled by the rain and the box reduced to a soft pulpy mass.

Nero, nonchalantly fiddling a trifling accompaniment to the burning of Rome, had nothing on Moses, as that blithe-hearted boy whistled a joyous, albeit unmelodious, lilt to the devastation of Betty's picture-show box.

The shower was over in a few moments and all prepared to leave the barn for the house.

Moses came to the kitchen door pushing an untemperamental-looking wheel-barrow with a leg in splints, that is, a leg of the vehicle. The barrow was filled with carrots. He was accompanied by Job and Henry. Behind him trooped a merry laughing group of expectant children.

As the door into the dining-room opened to the little guests, St. Elmo Mifsud's eyes almost darted out of his head, for there on the centre of a bountifully-spread table stood an enormous chocolate cake with

eleven candles burning on it. The revelation supplied a fitting climax for the epochal event of a thrilling picture show.

Betty entered the room last and was rendered almost speechless when she saw the birthday cake. She knew it would have one more candle than the cake for her last birthday had, but, O wonder of wonders! Around the edge was a wreath of morning-glories, made of pink and white icing, and in the heart of each was a silver dew-drop!

"Miss Gordon done it, I know," whispered Betty, clasping and unclasping her hands, "she's not a school-teacher at orl, she's jist a fairy growed up, an' Mar's a fairy godmother!"

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MOSES HAS EXCITING EXPERIENCES.

It was Saturday afternoon on a busy street in the city. Moses Wopp and Clarence Crump, at whose home the former was spending the week end, were on their way to the skating-rink. If they had wanted to skate there, the streets would have accommodated them with a sufficiently smooth surface, as an early frost had rimed the pavement.

A tall, lean, loose-jointed, large-limbed man was enjoying the frosty air and walked briskly humming a gay tune. All at once he found his face upturned to the glorious blue sky and a youthful voice reached his ear, "Did you see the telegraph pole sail over that icy spot?" Then another voice equally youthful, but with a distinct absence of city polish, answered, "Betcher life I seen him, wouldn't of missed it fer a punkin pie, he's lookin' fer gopher holes in the ground yet."

The loose-jointed one at last regained his feet and turning in the direction of the witnesses of his ignominy gave them a resentful glare. Moses was leaning against a fence and laughing till it seemed as though his eyes must remain indefinitely imbedded in their sockets.

"I'll give you spalpeens something to laugh over!" threatened the injured one, as he brushed the snow and dust from his hat. Then he slowly went on looking back at the unyielding glacier-like surface of the sidewalk.

He had not gone far when Moses caught up to him, "Please, Mister, here is three buttings orff yer vest, I guess." His hilarity was not under strict control and again he broke into uproarious laughter.

"None of your nonsense," replied the long-limbed pedestrian, his thankyou's cut short by Moses' cheerfulness.

In a few minutes Moses again touched the man's elbow, "Say, Mister, I come to arsk yer parding fer larfin' at yer, but, Glory be! I couldn't help it. My curtings never rolled up on a funnier sight."

Here his laughter became a series of concussions decidedly menacing to his well-being.

"I'll lick you good and plenty," answered the man, his face purple with indignation. Whereupon Moses, overcome utterly with mirth, lost his own balance and rubbed his freckled nose along a shining streak of slippery pavement.

Presently Clarence caught up to him and bore him down a side street lest further attempts at apology should cause him to again accost the irate stranger.

At the rink the enthusiastic country boy enjoyed the vast expanse of ice with no snags to interrupt his skating. A little girl wearing a bright red cap was enraptured to find her hand caught in Moses' strong grasp and to feel herself, still a learner, whirled giddily over the ice feeling as safe as on a carpeted floor.

The band struck up and, intoxicated with the rhythm of the music, Moses skated as he had never done before. At first an object of amusement to the city boys he became the centre of an admiring throng. His spirals

and figure eight's were such as to call forth envious remarks. Even Clarence Egerton Crump thawed and admitted to several school mates that Moses Wopp was a pretty solid pal, only a bit gawky in his get-up.

Moses returned to the Crump home with a prodigious appetite.

"I c'd eat a rhindoceros," he confided to Clarence.

"Well, Moses," queried his genial host at the supper table, "did the skating go pretty good to-day?"

"It was shore a wonder, with the band playin' an' all. I never heard sich moosic, not sence the circus."

At this moment the dining-room door opened and the daughter of the house entered the room.

"Here is Isobel. What kept you so late, young lady?" As Mr. Crump spoke he viewed the young girl with justifiable pride.

"O, Dadsie," was the reply, "this is recital afternoon, you know."

"My eye!" exclaimed Clarence, mockingly shading his eyes from his sister's radiance, "She's got her joy-bells on, what's the stunt?"

A haughty toss of the head was all the reply vouchsafed to this brotherly jibe.

"Are you hungry, Isobel?" questioned her mother.

"I'm ever so hungry, Mumsie." As she spoke, Isobel glanced at Moses who was sitting dumbfounded before the dainty girl he was meeting for the first time. His face was scarlet; his ears were by nature stiffly folded forward and the light shining through them from an electric globe on the wall made them now glow like red shells.

Suddenly a light, as a blinding flash of lightning, seemed to reveal to the boy his deficiencies. He stroked into place the strand of red hair that always stood upright on the crown of his head, untwisted his left leg from around his right and otherwise tried to attain the ideal of knightliness which on the moment crystallized in his mind.

Notwithstanding Moses' endeavors to be attractive, Isobel Crump's voice, as she addressed her brother's friend was so frigid that her words penetrated his ear like sharply-pointed icicles.

Later in the evening, as Isobel moved about the drawing-room in a flounced white frock, her shimmering hair falling over her shoulders, and her dainty high-heeled silver-buckled shoes skimming the roses on the carpet, Moses' eyes followed her in wonderment. Never before had he seen a creature so dainty, so airy, and so altogether like a princess. Betty was just plain Betty, straight hair plaited stiffly and tied with red ribbon, tanned face and hands, and big brown eyes "looking like they loved everybody." But here was a girl who could turn disdainful hazel eyes on one and could make one feel like an ignoble worm. Somehow Moses liked feeling like a worm, Isobel Crump was so immeasureably above him that he might as well feel like a worm as like any other more noble inhabitant of this terrestrial globe.

Clarence brought out his high-school books to display before the simple country boy the profundity of his learning. He opened his "Euclid" and Moses, sitting at the table, was vastly impressed with the sight of angles and triangles, and rash but

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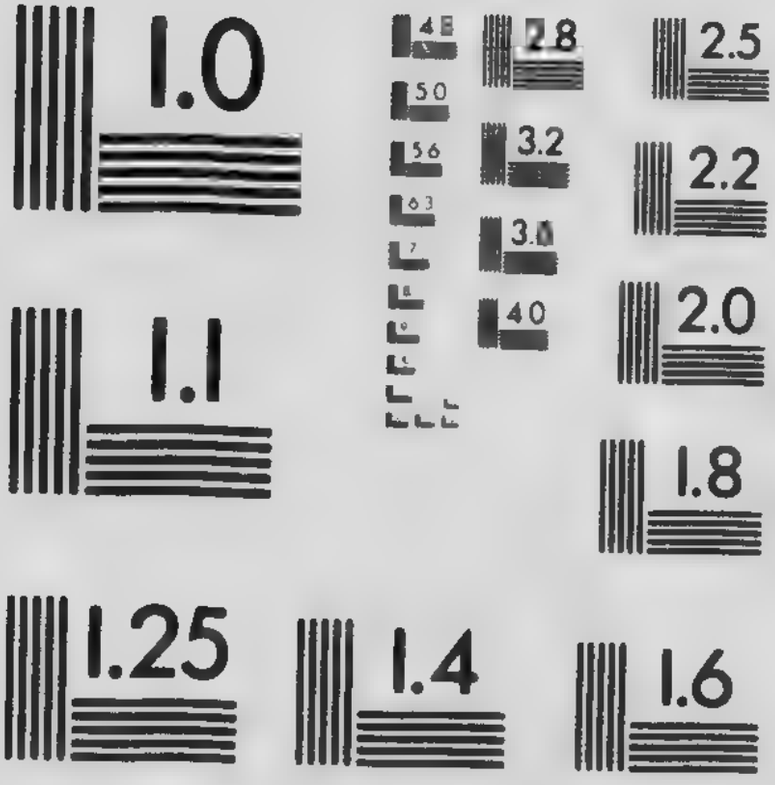


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interesting statements about *abc* being equal to *bcd*. His attitude toward Clarence became one of utter abasement as that budding Archimedes produced his exercise book covered with squat-shaped triangles gleefully pursuing circles whose rims were horribly mangled by reason of defective compasses.

Clarence had crossed the Pons Asinorum; a series of intoxicated circles, with sharp-cornered triangles piercing their fat sides, bore eloquent testimony to his faltering steps.

To further impress the unsophisticated guest, a Latin Grammar was exhumed from a pile of books, and totally careless of how Moses was smarting under such an exhibition of scholarship, Clarence recited loudly "Amo, amas, amat."

"What does that mean?" queried Moses.

"I love, thou lovest, he loves," said Clarence, scornfully, in answer to this preposterous question.

Moses blushed deeply and dared not raise his eyes from the ground lest Isobel should see his embarrassment.

In the Crump household, Clarence stood for all that was brilliant and intellectual, while Isobel stood for all that was fairy-like and charming. Moses felt himself a cipher, of no account whatever, in this wonderful home. He would need an extra administration of sympathy from Betty on his return. He thought at that moment very tenderly of the great brown eyes that "looked like they loved everybody."

"Isobel, play one of your pieces, let's see how your recital helped you to-day."

As Isobel seated herself on the piano-stool in compliance with her father's wishes, her white-flounced dress billowed up around her, reminding Moses, even in his chaotic state of mind, of the delicious creamy meringue on a lemon pie.

The captivating music of Grieg's "Butterfly" floated through the room and Moses watched the white supple fingers of the player with breathless eagerness.

"Gosh!" he exclaimed, as Isobel closed on the last startlingly unexpected note, "that's where some feller planks his strawr hat on a beauty butterfly!"

Covered with confusion at his outburst, Moses sank into his chair and remained silent till Mr. Crump, by adroit conversation, caused him to once again lose his self-consciousness. He called Moses' attention to a few musical instruments in the corner of the room and led him over to view them more closely.

Mr. Crump indulged in an unusual hobby, the collection of old musical instruments, and a motley group it was that Moses eyed with growing wonder.

"This here thing looks like a mule with his ribs druv in an' stan'in' on his haunches. What d'ye call it?"

"That's a string bass."

"An orful good-natured tied-in-at-the-waist critter, aint it?" commented Moses.

"This is a lyre, very old," said Mr. Crump, handling an ancient instrument tenderly. Moses looked up suddenly, he hoped nothing he had said called forth the remark.

"This is a xylophone, take this little wooden hammer and play a few notes." Moses took the hammer held out to him and

striking a wooden bar brought out a weird but sweet sound. He struck several bars in succession and was enraptured to find that they produced a sort of veiled silvery music. "Sounds like the moon looks when you carnt see it fer clouds," he mused, "Mar thinks I'd make a moosican, mebbe she's right."

"Did Clarence show you the sights of the city this morning?" asked Mr. Crump, trying to repress a smile.

"Yeh, we went to the shootin' gallery, an' the amuseum, an' got inter a little square cage an' shot away up to the top of an orful high buildin' an' got a sparrer's eye view of the city."

"Would you like to live in the city?"

"Sometimes yes an' orftener no. I'd hate to leave Betty an' the pinto."

"What is Betty like?"

"Hev you ever hed a toothache an' orl at onct it bust an' stopped achin'? Well, no matter what trouble yer in, jist a sight o' Betty's like that."

"She must come to visit us sometime."

"She'd like fust-rate to come, but Glory

be! She'd want ter fetch her pet turkey and Jethro."

"Whose Jethro?"

"He's jist the plainest gorl-darndest dorg in the worl', but me an' Betty thinks heaps of him, an' Job's lorst one eye but he's a dandy live feather duster orl right." Gestures and grins illuminated this earnest speech.

"Now, Clarence, recite William Tell for us." Mrs. Crump put her hand on her son's shoulder and turned him away from the bookcase which had been serving as a screen for the boy's laughing countenance, "You must help Moses enjoy his visit."

"O, that chestnut!" scornfully ejaculated Isobel.

"Yes, I s'pose we can listen to you scramble up and down the piano keys all night, but if I do anything it's another story."

"No quarreling now. Come, Clarence, do as your mother asks."

Thus adjured by his father the elocutionist began in a loud dramatic voice:

"WILLIAM TELL.

" 'Place there the boy,' the tyrant said
'Fix me the apple on his head'."

As Clarence depicted the terror of the father, lest his arrow miss the mark and kill his son, Moses rose from his chair in breathless suspense. However, the arrow cleft the apple and left the boy unscathed, and the relieved Moses, sinking back in his chair, recovered himself sufficiently to murmur "What an orful chanct fer anyone ter take!"

Mrs. Crump smiled kindly at the impressionable boy, and lest her son's evident amusement should wound his feelings, she asked, "Do you like hearing of other countries and of other people?" "Yeh, Mar says I'm a reglar jographer I like it so much."

"In that case, Clarence must take you to the Sunday-school hall to-morrow afternoon to hear a talk on China. There will be all sorts of curious things shown and you are sure to enjoy it."

In his anticipation of the Sunday afternoon treat in store for him, Moses dreamed

all that night of little dark-skinned men running round after him with bowls of rice and jabbing him with chop-sticks.

Early on the following afternoon the two boys found their way into front seats in the Sunday-school hall. The address was fairly well under way when the excitement of absorbing so much information in so short a space of time told on Moses' constitution. His nose began to bleed. With a handkerchief like a small-sized counterpane applied to the offending nasal organ the boy tip-toed squeakily out of the room.

Vainly he explored the corridors seeking a tap for water to bathe his bleeding nose. The more doors Moses went through the more doors seemed to beckon him on through their portals. He reflected that if he had only had the good fortune to bring the key of the pantry door at home, that large piece of cold steel applied to the back of his neck would speedily have stopped the sanguinary flood.

Turning to the right he entered a short dark corridor and noticed at the end of the passageway a brass knob gleaming. With

renewed hope he approached the shining mark and extended his hand to open the door.

It was dark and the handkerchief over his nose rendered one eye ineffective so that he could not see more than a few inches ahead of him. On opening the door he found himself on what seemed a short flight of steps which he proceeded to descend. All at once he tripped and down he went struggling for breath into the font that had been filled with water for the evening baptismal service.

"Holy Smoke! Be this the River Jording I've come ter?"

Dim religious lights from stained-glass windows shone through the church and falling on the boy chilled him to the marrow.

"Gosh! Wisht Betty was here right this minute. Mebbe I'm dyin'. Hope nobody starts twangin' a harp. My nose is worser'n ever!"

Moses regained his equilibrium and as the water came just to his hips he turned to retrace his way to the steps down which he had wandered.

"Where is my cap?" With his free hand he felt his bare head. Looking around the luckless boy saw his headgear in the middle of the font and turned to rescue it. The water became deeper, until he stood in it almost to his arm-pits.

As he reached for his cap a door opposite the one through which he had passed opened, and the grey head of the sexton appeared.

"Shade of Beelzebub! Where did you spring from?" shouted the astonished man.

"Please, Mister, my nose was bleedin' an' I lorst my way lookin' fer warter, an' here I am on Jording's stormy banks."

"You young scamp, you found water, didn't you, more than you needed? For the love of St. Patrick, if it isn't the spalpeen that split his sides laughing at me falling on the ice yesterday!"

The old man peered over the steps, and Moses recognized the loose-jointed long-limbed individual who had provided him with such mirth on the previous day.

"Just to think I've got to heat up more water and fill this tank again for a good-for-nothing urchin like you! Begorra! It's

worth it though to see you get a good ducking!"

Through the open door could be heard the strains of "Pull for the shore" sung with heart and soul by the intermediate class, and to that lively air Moses made for the exit as expeditiously as his sodden garments would allow.

"My religion's purty well wartered now, I guess," said Moses, sheepishly, to Clarence, who met him at the end of the fateful corridor. That youth had followed his country friend from the Sunday-school hall, but not in time to direct his erring steps.

"You are one simp," he comforted, at the same time putting his own overcoat about the shivering boy.

At the door of the Crump household, Moses stood before the daughter of the house who answered the bell, burning hot with the fever of an overwhelming embarrassment. His body glowed so that steam might have been seen arising from his dripping garments. He almost yearned for incarceration in an ice-house. His personal pulchritude had not been enhanced by the experience and the critical eyes of the young

girl failed to express any degree of admiration or sympathy. More than ever Moses longed for the encircling arms of Betty.

On the morrow, before returning home, he made several purchases with the money his mother had slipped into his hand as she whispered, "Hev a good time, Mosey, but dont fergit to say yer prayers reglar."

He arrived home Monday evening, and was received as though a visit of several months' duration had torn him from the bosom of the family.

Ebenezer Wopp became the grateful recipient of a quire of paper for notes. Miss Gordon was enabled to add to the decorations of her bureau a celluloid picture-frame on which were painted vivid blue and pink forget-me-nots. Mrs. Wopp reckoned "to git great comfort fer her corns an' bungions" in a pair of soft house-shoes.

It was evident that great care had been exercised over Betty's gift. She exclaimed joyously over a Cyclamen, whose pale pink blooms brought the flush of delight to her cheeks; a bag of peppermint bulls' eyes elicited a like degree of appreciation.

"This here flower aint a mornin'-glory,

but the leaves is mighty li[illegible]t, an' the flowers is jist as purty." Moses explained.

"O, Mosey, these leaves is lovely, an' jist look here roun' the edge, looks like the fairies has left footprints!"

Another gift Moses brought his little sister was a small shell purse containing a new silver coin. This largess was in a way expiatory. He had not yet regained his self-respect since his refusal to grant Betty's request for a quarter, and it seemed as though the act of expiation must repeat itself indefinitely.

Betty said her prayers that night before her cyclamen. It seemed to her a "mornin'-glory that had been growed by an angel, its petals sparkled so, an' it smelled so pure." She breathed very softly her thanksgiving, with a vague feeling that it had wings and could find its way better than she knew.

As she thought how dear and kind Moses had been to her, bringing this wonderful plant and the shell purse, not forgetting the peppermint bulls' eyes, she went to sleep with the conviction that she must be the happiest girl in the world.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### A SAMPLE OF EBENEZER WOPP'S IRE.

"This shore has been a toilin' day fer me," sighed Mrs. Wopp, as she opened the oven door and revealed a tempting array of loaves, their brown domes swelling up and over the sides of shining black pans.

"This stove is not drawin' any too good, an' what with these pipes an' the parlor pipes not actin' christian-like my eyes run warter orl day long. Ebenezer Wopp, I sees a job ahead fer you. My patience is wore out an' this very day you'll git at the pipes an' git the soot cleaned out."

"I reckon it is the biggest half of some time sence those there jints was took apart," agreed Ebenezer, with unerring diplomacy, searching through several slips of paper as though to find memoranda thereon, "I reckon I'd better git to work this very minute."

"Moses!" called husband and wife, simultaneously. Mrs. Wopp's voice spanned

an interval of about a dozen semi-tones, and as it always grew in volume in direct ratio to the emergency of the duty to be imposed, the last syllable of her son's name fell on that wretched boy's ear like a clap of thunder. Mr. Wopp's accents remained on nearly all occasions at the same even degree of meekness. Nature had not given him the temperament to indulge in crescendos or double fortes.

Moses was whistling a dismal discordant air in the backyard when the voice of his mother smote his ears.

"Yeh, Mar."

"What yer whistlin' so mournful like?" queried his mother, "makes me think of funerals an' sich like; jist come in an' help yer par with the stove-pipes, mebbe that'll cheer you up."

Moses' face became as mournful as his music had been. It was as though he had suddenly realized that life was, after all, more serious than one suspects in one's idle moments.

The first act of the unwilling recruit was to bring into the house a coal-scuttle and

large shovel, clanking them ominously as he walked.

"Stop that there 'Dead March of Saul,' an' go put on yer overalls," ordered Mrs. Wopp, "what's the idear of the gardenin' tool, go git the li.tlest shovel to put inter the chimbly, an' don't let the grass grow under yer feet, neither."

By this time Mr. Wopp was bearing a length of pipe into the yard. The parlor looked like a morgue with its inanimate objects lying hidden under sheets and cloths of varying degrees of past usefulness. Through a hole of one sheet could be seen the listless towzled head of Hannah, her faded wax countenance betraying the need of a tonic.

The energetic Mrs. Wopp had accompanied her commands to Moses by a wide sweeping of arms, and from these ample arms had billowed yards of sheeting to cover from the ruinous soot her treasured parlor possessions.

An enlarged crayon portrait in a wide gilt frame of Moses as a baby in a state of round cherubic innocent nudity, had been

added recently to the mural decorations and was especially well covered with cloths.

"Wisht that orful pitcher 'd fall inter the swill-pail an' then turn a somerset in the soot-pile," murmured the boy as he noticed the care exercised over its safety.

In overalls, the color of which was entirely unrecognizable, Moses began to help his father carry through the house sooty lengths of pipe. Very carefully and gingerly they stepped as the eagle eye of Mrs. Wopp was upon them, and they knew that a full battery of reprimands and warnings was at hand.

In the middle of this trying work, Moses remembered he had glimpsed a large tempting piece of jelly-roll on the pantry shelf. As soon as an opportune moment arrived he slipped, unnoticed as he thought, into the pantry and immediately life took on a new and brighter interest.

"Here you, Moses," shouted his mother from the top of the stairs, "I heerd the pantry door squeakin', no eatin' till the job's done." She further informed him that stopping to eat "et inter his time too

much an' the work must be done afore dark."

Moses returned to work with jelly and soot mingling in a purple streak on cheek and chin.

"You look like some kind-faced happy-go-lucky cow, chewin' her cud," teased Mrs. Wopp, standing at the parlor door and noting the reminiscent moving of her son's jaws.

"This is excitin' fun," moaned Moses, as he picked his way carefully with a tin elbow that threatened every moment to capsize with its flaky mass of black dust, "about as excitin' as playin' with the ashes in the mornin'."

All this time Mr. Wopp had carried and brushed and shaken stove-pipe lengths until his face and bald head resembled a lattice-work trellis. Only one length remained to be operated on before proceeding to the upper storey, where the stove-pipe continued its tortuous way to the chimney, warming sundry rooms on its beneficent course.

Ebenezer Wopp was the last silent word in patient masculinity, but his face, becom-

ing darker with his work, would lead an onlooker to believe that sinister thoughts were struggling to find expression.

However, the stove-pipe was at last cleaned and ready to put up. Moses' moroseness had by now developed into a complaint, the chief symptoms of which were sniffling and coughing.

"I got an orful cold, goin' in an' out so orften," he complained.

"A dose of senner tea'll fix that, my boy," was Mrs. Wopp's cheerful rejoinder.

What really ailed Moses was the prospect of bolstering up the pipes again.

"Here, Mose, hol' this here jint while I fit the next one inter it." A tongue-twisting silence ensued.

"Now, Mose, fer the elbow. Stiddy! Don't shove! Don't pull! Hole her stiddy!"

"Glory be! It's pulled apart at the other end!" ejaculated the perspiring assistant.

"Try agin, Mose, now not too hard! Easy like! There! Jest a leetle bit more! Stop! Hold on! Shucks! Everythink's went wrong! Here, we'll start agin."

The work went on, each length at the first possible opportunity resuming its state of strict neutrality and refusing to be drawn into negotiations.

Finally, Ebenezer Wopp's musings, which had been gathering force as he worked, burst into speech. For a quiet man he became almost oratorical. Then he fell to soliloquizing audibly.

His mutterings rumbled along, a series of submerged imprecations. He paused for breath and as soon as he had accumulated enough for his dire purpose, he swore what was to him a long and fearful oath.

"By heck!" he thundered.

Then Moses commenced. He ran up and down a chromatic scale of puffs and groans and sniffles, ending with a cadence that sounded like, "Gosh dern!"

Involved and intricate variations of "Holy smoke!" made the air sulphureous as a swaying piece of wire caught his shoulder and tore a large gash in his shirt.

"Moses Habakuk Ezra Wopp an' Ebenezer Wopp! You'd orter be shamed of yerselves. You shorely must of fell with Luci-

fer when he come tumblin' outer the sky. Them swear words make every single hair on my head stan' on edge."

In answer to his wife's reproof, Mr. Wopp almost roared, "Where's the hammer? Gone hide an' hair it is, like everythink else."

"Ebenezer Wopp, I've tarlked to you till I'm black in the face, but it's jist wastin' valyble breath. Yer brains is allers woolgatherin'. The hammer's in yer hip-pocket."

"Mose, hol' this benighted idjit of a jint till I drive a nail in the wall to wire it up," called Mr. Wopp, thrusting a nail between his teeth and turning his back on his wife.

"Land O' Goshen! Ye've a peck of nails in the wall orlready. You couldn't add two an' two without wrappin' up yer thumb an' countin' what's left," remonstrated Mrs. Wopp.

Mr. Wopp, goaded to desperation, breathed audibly his opinion regarding pipe-fitting. Diogenes in one of his periodical excursions from his tub would have been glad to category that remark as an

honest man's attitude, at least toward certain jobs.

Moses' opinion, repressed, however, in his bursting bosom, was of a like complexion, only much more vivid. He was hesitating between the liquid verge of tears and the lambent verge of profane utterance.

The door opened and Betty, who had stayed in school to clean the black-board for "teacher," appeared. She came in bringing with her the very essence of outdoor freshness and buoyancy.

"Dad an' Mosey don't look orful happy," she laughed. "Smile at me, Mosey."

"Arsk a dorg with a tin pail tied to his ear to smile at yer," returned Moses, sourly.

"Them critters has swore more than I ever heerd sence the ketchup bottle fomented an' bust an' splashed orl over Par's shirt an' trickled down his pants."

Here Mrs. Wopp related for the hundredth time the account of the ketchup disaster.

"When I heerd Par swear I run inter the kitchen, an' there he stood with suthin red orl down his face an' neck. A ketchup

bottle on the shelf above had bust over him an' I thort it was blood. 'Ebenezer Wopp,' I says, 'whose been tryin' to arssarssinate yer?' All he said was 'By Heck,' but a forty-horse power gun couldn't of roared through the kitchen louder 'n them words."

Mrs. Wopp was overcome with laughter at the bare memory of the picture her irate husband had presented.

"Hurry up, Moses," she called, as soon as her joy had subsided, "git those pipes finished an' go arfter yor chores."

"I'm chored from mornin' till night, an' arfter I go to sleep I do some more chorin' jist to keep my hand in." Moses was in a distinctly peevish mood.

"Can I hev a piece of jelly-roll, Mar?" coaxed Betty, stemming the tide of her brother's complaints.

"There's nary a piece left, that greedy boy et it orl up."

"I b'lieve Moses'll eat jelly-roll some day till he rolls up hisself. I'm orful hungry, can I hev some fresh bread?"

"What! Bread jist outer the oving! There aint a sinner this minute but what

begun his vile career on a slice of fresh bread. Indisgestion shore fills jails an' 'sylums more nor drink. You carn't hev one slice till to-morrer."

"O, Mar, jist a teeny-weeny brown crust, it carn't hurt me."

"Orl right, you rascalashus coaxer, an' go make some tea an' fetch some crackers an' cheese an' we'll orl hev a bite."

Mr. Wopp and Moses, who had hurried to the upper storey to escape the recital of the ketchup episode, now came heavily down the stairs, their task at last finished.

"Light the stov ſose, an' git the house het up. Mis' Wil. ms must of been froze to a cinder yesterday when she was here. That stove did nothin' but smoke till our eyes leaked. I expected every minute to see her turn into an iced berg. Do you know, Ebenezer, Mis' Williams told me that Mrs. Frame's sister married the oldest son of Mr. Frame an' his first wife."

"Well, well, you don't say!"

"Shore nuff, what relationship do you s'pose they are all to each other now?"

"Ain't she her own aunt?" hazarded Mr.

Wopp, abstractedly thrusting his hammer into his boot top and scratching his bald head with a pair of pincers.

Betty, not interested in intricate relationships, tip-toed into the parlor and uncovering the organ, played with one finger "Home Sweet Home." The wool-embroidered [illegible] on the wall almost wept.

"Kettle [illegible]ilin', Glory Girl, an' Par an' Mose'd like a cup of tea, but 'fore you leave the organ play 'Greenlan's Icy Mountains,' it's been runnin' in my head orl day."

"Don't nobody start Greenlan's Icy Mountings round here," objected Moses. "I got orl the cool drafts I need comin' through this hen hole in my shirt."

Having disposed of the song, dear to her mother's heart in spite of the protestations of Moses, Betty went to the kitchen and in a few moments returned with a steaming pot of tea.

"Warsh yer hands, Mosey, an' Par, an' come on, Ma: here's yer tea an' crackers. Wisht I hed a piece of jelly-roll."

"Fer the love of mike, what's that noise?" Moses' eyes seemed to almost dart from his

head. The others looked up as a distinct rustling was heard in the parlor. Moses was on his feet first. The noise came from the stove.

"The house is haunted, Ebenezer. It's them swear words has brung evil speerits. Moses run fer the ax an' come back an' open the stove door, lucky the fire wasn't started yit."

As the stove door opened for the intrepid Moses, out flew Tillie the white bantam hen now as black as a crow with soot. She fluttered into the face of Moses who was kneeling before the stove.

"How in the name of orl the aporstles did that hen git in there?" questioned Mrs. Wopp.

"Must of warlked in when I left a jint outside fer a minute. She shore is a dark complected bird now." As Moses spoke he stretched out his arm for the sooty Tillie, but with an indignant cackle the hen tore through the dining-room into the kitchen with Moses and Betty in hot pursuit.

"That ole bantam has shore got some speeditood," reflected Moses, in gasps, as he made several futile plunges for Tillie.

The pursuit lasted longer than was anticipated and was most disastrous to the clean kitchen floor. Betty and Moses themselves got soot on their shoes and their footprints wrought havoc in the spotless kitchen.

As that long-suffering Mrs. Wopp wiped up the last traces of the chase she observed, "Moses' footprints is twict as big as Betty's, but hern is twict as many. They'll shore git inter jist as much mischief, but Praise be! They're both toein' in the right d'rection."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A PAIR OF CHECKED TROUSERS.

From the waist down, Moses' masculine and uncouth figure seemed to utter a dull protest against cut-me-downs. There are many forces in life that growing youths are not able to control. One of these, in the career of Moses, was the inexorable will of his mother that ordained home-made garments for his nether limbs. Made from his father's discarded trousers of black and grey check, the new pair of abominations that adorned the legs of the youthful Wopp bore evidence to the unskilled fingers of the maker. They had the generous dimensions allowed by an imaginative and economical mind that could look into the future and could see legs lengthening and a general expansion. In fact, the coarse checked tweed fell in slight gathers, fore and aft. The dingy greenish-grey coat that slouched from Moses' shoulders did not fail to heighten the effect, but seemed to set the costume in italics.

Going home from school one Friday afternoon, Moses heard sniggering half-suppressed comments behind him. He walked along slowly, contemplating his big toe that protruded pathetically from a large hole in his shoe. It reached his ears that one aesthetic youth was dazzled by the kaleidoscopic effect of his checked trousers; in other words, it made him sea-sick. Moses quickened his pace slightly, but his face looked like an advance notice of calamity. Presently he turned and glowered at his tormenters.

"Smile, Moses, dern yer empty corn-cob face! Smile!" shouted one.

Betty Wopp was gambolling along the road with other little school-girls and heard the jeers addressed to the wretched boy. The penetrating sense of Moses' need of her brought her to a halt. Indignation made her tight little braids of hair assume an aspect as terrific as Medusa's snaky coils. She ran lightly up to Moses and walked beside him.

"Never mind, Mosey, we'll tell Miss Gordon. She'll give them sulphur an' brimstone to-morrer."

"S'Gordon won't care," grunted Moses. "She never had to wear Par's old pants, an' she won't un'erstan' how a feller feels."

"Oh, Mosey, she un'erstan's everything, she's jist wonderful." Betty's voice was positive.

"Jist hold on there, Mose, we wanter play a game of checkers on yer pants." At this jibe Moses turned and held up a clenched fist as warning of a potential thrashing which the boys knew would never materialize. Moses was slow to active wrath.

One bullying boy, to punctuate his last taunt to Moses before turning into another road, picked up a stone and hurled it at his dejected victim. The stone glanced and struck Jethro who was bounding along the road to meet his mistress. A piteous yelp followed by a loud howl, and Betty was on her knees beside the wounded animal. She turned and shouted fiery imprecations after the fleeing boys.

"Where is the dern dog hurt?" commiserated Moses.

Betty's tears by now were flowing too fast for her to make an answer. She picked

up the whimpering dog and proceeded to carry him home. From time to time Moses stroked the quivering head and murmured low phrases of comfort.

When the house was reached, Eliza Wopp was standing, an effective barricade, at the door, waving her large hands in a gesture indicative of dismay. Moses stoically told his tale of assault.

"But, Mose, you shorely didn't fergit a sorft answer turneth away wrarth?"

"Oh!" interposed Betty, "but they didn't throw a sorft stone. I don't b'lieve in sorft answers no more."

"To-morrer'll see my revenge," growled Moses, now thoroughly roused to action under the protection of his own roof.

After supper, Betty was sought diligently, but without success. At last Moses discovered her underneath the huge red tablecloth that covered the dining-room table. She was sound asleep on the floor with Jethro in her arms and his head on her bosom. Her face was smeared with tear-stains.

"Come, Betty Girl," said Moses, "Mar wants you to go to bed."

"Yes, Mosey, I jist want to go to my mornin'-glory garding to tell it good-night." She rubbed her sleepy tear-stained eyes.

"Come, Jethro, Betty'll carry her li'l white puppykins, pore li'l footsy 's so sore."

Betty staggered with her burden out into the garden to leave with her flowers the benediction of her presence and also to crave a few small favors for herself.

"Jethro," she whispered in the ear of her playmate, "I hated jist orful to-day, an' I didn't hev a cheerful liver. Let's pray together if the Lord will fergive all of us, me an' those hateful boys, too."

As Betty stood in her garden whispering to Jethro, Nell Gordon came slowly down the path. For many weary weeks Howard Eliot had evaded her in every way. Was his jealousy so strong as to part them irrevocably? She remembered with remorse the flutterings of her heart when genius had knocked. She had learned since that greatness and domestic felicity are seldom associated even in the mind of the most ardent lover. Zalhambra was a human cyclone, he had simply carried her away for the

moment with his magnetic personality. She had come through the experience with the conviction that ordinary everyday capabilities make for happiness, while genius is an abnormal condition bringing joy to the multitude, but disaster to the individual. All her femininity called out now for the support of a strong nature unhampered by genius.

Nell looked toward the morning-glory garden and there she saw Betty kneeling in the moonlight. Jethro was sitting up on his hind legs beside the little figure, holding his paws before him. The moonlight fell on his penitential white body, on the stiff braids of the sorrowful and contrite Betty, and lighted up the bright yellow nasturtiums that filled the air with their pungent odor. The morning-glory leaves gleamed in the pure white light.

"Oh, Lord," prayed Betty, "it was Murf Bliggins as throwed the stone, please don't fergit. Make Jethro's foot better. Mar allers says, 'arsk an' it'll be given.' All I arsk is fer Jethro's foot. He is so l'il, Oh, Lord, an' the stone was so big. An' don't

fergit it was Murf Bliggins as done it. Please put it in Miss Gordon's heart to smite the Philistones with the edge of the sword. Mebbe you could put it inter Ma's heart to buy Mose a pair of pants that won't be so hard on him, Oh, Lord. Amen!"

Nell Gordon's eyes were wet with something else than mirth when Betty entered the house later with her pet in her arms. She had heard of the assault upon the innocent Moses and Jethro and resolved to assist mightily in the smiting of the Philistines. She also held a private consultation with her purse and decided to send off at once to a popular mail-order house for a pair of trousers for Moses of a distinctly different cut from those that had been his undoing.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### BETTY'S ILLNESS.

Moses adored his little foster-sister when she was well; but sick, his adoration turned to blind worship. Fo several days Betty had been ill. Moses' religion, bottled up during care-free days, burst forth in foam of intercession for Betty's return to health.

"Oh, Lord, she's orl I got," he wailed. He hinted that there would be no more light in him, than in Job's blind eye, should Betty be lost to him.

The first sign of return to health was indicated by a slight querulousness that invalids seem to claim as their prerogative. The convalescent wanted books and pictures, her discarded favorite, Hannah, stiff with long neglect, and her pets individually and collectively. Then having run the gamut of dumb playmates, she called for her beloved friends.

"I want Howard Eliot," she cried, he can sing so lovely, an' I want Miss Gordon, she's so comfortin'."

All this time Mrs. Wopp ran breathlessly up and down stairs attending to the feverish child. Even wash-day was postponed, but the terrors of that dread event would never again appal Moses, he felt sure, if only Betty got well. Ebenezer Wopp was distracted and neglected to take his usual number of notes.

Directly the invalid's querulous demand for the rancher was made, Moses started off to fetch him.

"Wot's the use of livin' if Betty grows them there wings they talk of?" he demanded of the fowl as they scurried from his path.

When the two arrived, Nell Gordon was sitting with the sick child and crooning softly to her. Howard Eliot drew near, accidentally touching the firm round arm of Nell as he did so.

"Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards," quoted Mrs. Wopp. "We've had sich a time, but I'm shore our li'l Mornin' Glory is gittin' better now." She gazed at the child with true maternal affection. "She's lookin' kinder peart agin."

"Glory must git better, nothin's no fun no more," blurted Moses.

"Betty's not goin' to no kingdom come yet," assured Mrs. Wopp, her optimism rising like a star of the first magnitude to lighten the darkness of her son's midnight sky.

"There's no mention of circus-ladies going there anyway," said Howard, smiling. This reference to her attempts to outbarnum Barnum brought a bright smile to the wan face of Betty.

"Don't stan' there fillin' the doorway like a bung in a barrel, Moses," reprimanded Mrs. Wopp. "That boy's gone clean petrified. Go an' fetch the lamp, it air gittin' so dark I can't tell which is Glory an' which is Miss Gordon."

As Moses clattered down stairs, Mrs. Wopp continued, "There is shore a thunderstorm comin' up to-night. 'Pears to me I heerd like a roll of drums."

A dull yellow glow from the kerosene lamp, placed by Moses on the bureau, lighted up the figure of Betty reclining on snowy pillows. On one side of her was seated Howard, his arm about the drowsy

child. On the side of the bed, squarely seated on one of Mrs. Wopp's texts worked into the patchwork quilt, was Nell, watching the little pallid face and trying to avoid the eyes of her silent lover.

"Been talkin' to a grave-digger?" queried Mrs. Wopp, of her offspring, as Moses selected a comfortable seat, his sober face still bearing traces of the last few days' anxiety. She looked on the solicitude of Moses with an approving eye, but it was necessary, however, to hide her maternal pride by a series of assaults upon him on every possible pretext. Her banterings also helped to keep her son and heir in the spotlight.

"There's Mose allers ready fer a sit-down, a sort of kerlapsible verlise."

During Betty's illness these one-sided dialogues were more than usually plentiful. In this way only was Mrs. Wopp able to alleviate the "gnawin' at her heart-strings" as she said, at having Betty so ill. It also kept the boy alive to the fact that life's path was not strewn with "cabbage roses." Such, at least, were the confidences poured into the sympathetic ear of his pinto.

Moses capitalized his bulk to effectively fill the large chair into which he sank. He surveyed with approval the new trousers presented to him by Miss Gordon, and tried to blot from his mind the ignominy that had attended the wearing of the ill-fitting pair. Those discarded checked monstrosities languished under Moses' bed in close consultation with a pair of decrepit and muddy shoes. It was so sweet to the boy to see signs of convalescence in Betty that he took great comfort in just gazing on her pale face with its wisps of fair hair across the forehead. He summed up his general attitude to life by whispering to himself, "I don't give a doughnut fer orl the check pants in Alberta."

A low rumble of thunder was heard in the distance and a flash of lightning made the coal-oil lamp look like a bilious spot in the room.

"Sing something, Mar." Betty's plaintive voice broke the silence.

"What'll I sing Betty?"

"Oh, the song 'bout the clouds rollin' away," she yawned, "I want everybody to

be happy." She looked at her teacher and Nell wondered if the child had read her heart and had seen its unhappiness.

"Wait till the clouds roll by, Jenny,
Wait till the clouds roll by,
Jenny, my own true loved one
Wait till the clouds roll by."

Mrs. Wopp's voice, a dramatic outburst before which almost any cloud would have quailed, filled the bed-room. Betty turned to Nell Gordon, "I hope all yer clouds'll hev silver linin's, Miss Gordon," she smiled.

"Why, Betty?"

" 'Cause I love you, 'n' I hope the edges'll be all pink like my mornin'-glories."

Howard caught Nell's gaze. He longed to gather the girl who had so completely captured his heart into his arms and kiss away their estrangement.

"I think the linin' of Miss Gordon's cloud needs polishin' these days," ventured Betty, shyly.

"Won't you sing something else, Mrs. Wopp." Nell was growing uncomfortable

under Betty's reference to the unburnished state of her cloud.

Mrs. Wopp obligingly gave as an encore, "There were ninety and nine," apropos of nothing whatever. Then turning to a portrait on the wall, she enlarged on the musical ability of a great-uncle from whom she reckoned she had received her gift of song.

"I sorter hoped Moses'd take arter Uncle Josh, too," she said, regretfully.

The inexorable portrait on the wall seemed to gaze down on the recalcitrant youth with disapproval.

"He's been pushin' up the daisies fer thirty years, I ain't goin' to warble to please no tombstun." Moses swung a ponderous foot to give emphasis to his decision.

"Don't sit there wool-gatherin' anyways, Mose, or the moths'll nest in yer head. Ef you carn't sing in toon, you kin bring up a cup of tea fer Miss Gordon an' Mr. Eliot, an' don't fergit Betty an' yer Mar."

Betty was still faintly laughing at Moses' spirited retort to his mother's observations on his singing.

"Betty dimples in an' out, like Mar's dough," he remarked, joyously, "she's shore gittin' better."

Going down the stairs his loud unmelodious singing reached the ears of those in the bedroom. When he arrived at the foot, Betty, whose ears were attuned to all acts of outlawry, had reason to believe that Moses performed three successive somersaults.

"That boy'll sartinly spill the tea," prophecied Mrs. Wopp, with laughing pessimism.

"I don't give two whoops ef he does," Betty was bubbling with suppressed mirth.

Moses reappeared with a tray. The tea had been spilled as foretold by his Mother, but sufficient was left for the party. Betty drank from a dainty cup, her little finger straight and rigid as was fitting for the delicate hand-painted china

The effulgence of Mrs. Wopp's smile was somewhat obscured by "I told you so's," but the aroma of the steaming tea-pot soon restored its radiance.

"This is like the cup I had at Mrs. Newman's, in Calgary," said Betty, then turn-

ing to Nell she asked, "Do you 'member the lovely chiner cups at Mrs. Newman's, time Mr. Zalhamber was there?"

"Who is Mr. Zalhamber?" asked Howard, as though he had forgotten his existence.

"Oh, he is a wonderful piannerist," explained Betty. "He played, Oh, jist lovely, jist like birds singin' an' rivers runnin' an' the sun shinin'. But arfter he played he looked so fierce I was skeered of him. Miss Gordon didn't like him either, arfter she got knowin' him better."

"He didn't come roun' here, I kin tell you though," joined in Mrs. Wopp, energetically. In speaking of Mr. Zelamba, her voice modulated harshly into a key of hyper-acidulated sharps. "I says to Miss Gordon, an' she jined in with me, a piannerist may be well 'nough as an actor man, but when it comes to takin' fer keeps, give me a real man." After taking a deep breath she continued, "My, but he makes a heap of money an' he loves it, too; but when he gits to be about forty, the lines in his fiz'll be as tight as my clothes-rope arter a spell of rain."

After this vigorous onslaught upon the quondam admirer of Nell, Mrs. Wopp ordered Moses to help her prepare the spare room on the ground-floor for the young rancher.

"The storm'll be worse yet, Mr. Howard, so you jist stay here till the cock crows fer risin', an' I'll cook you a breakfast better'n a pore lonely bachelor kin cook fer hisself."

From the kitchen came an unmistakeable odor of cheese. Ebenezer Wopp was having a slight snack before retiring. With the back of his nervous hand he was wiping from the corners of his mouth the telltale crumbs.

"Ebenezer Wopp, no wonder you talk sich ridicilsome nonsense in yer sleep, eatin' cheese at night. It's 'nough to make you dream of boer-constructors."

Uplifted by limburger, Mr. Wopp grew emboldened, "Jist a mouthful of somethink don't hurt no-body, an' I'll be asleep afore you kin say Jack Robinson, an' ef I talk as loud as you snore, we're even I reckon."

"There ain't a shadder of a doubt Moses takes arter his Par in the gift of the gab," was Mrs. Wopp's genial rejoinder.

Upstairs the lightning filled Betty's room with a weird intermittent radiance. The child had become increasingly drowsy and asked Howard to sing her to sleep.

"What song would you like, Betty?"

"Mary an' Martha hev jist gone along to ring them shinin' bells."

To the melody of the shining bells, Betty dropped off to sleep.

Nell's mirth at Betty's choice of a hymn could be stifled no longer. Howard's studied aloofness yielded before her laughter and the hand that was not supporting Betty caught and pressed the small dimpled fingers of Nell.

"Can you forgive me, Nell? This guiding star of Moses is our guiding star, too." After a moment Howard continued, "I wish we could transplant this morning-glory into *our* garden, don't you?"

Nell's answer was somehow strangely muffled.

Although she was asleep, Betty was fully conscious in that Dream-World of love and joy where values are real. Nell and Howard saw a tender smile light up her sweet

face as Mrs. Wopp's singing, subdued by distance, floated into the room,

"Let us keep the wheat an' roses
Carstin' out the thorns an' charff,
Let us find our sweetest comfort
In the blessin's of to-day,
With a patient hand removin'
Orl the briers from the way.

Then scartter seeds of kindness,
Then scartter seeds of kindness,
Then scartter seeds of kindness
Fer our reapin' bye 'n' bye."

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